

[Transcriber's emphasis: Passages in red with bold-face lettering ]

## THE JESSE DUNCAN ELLIOTT FILE

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### Text No. 1

*Commercial Advertiser*  
(New York City)

**Friday morning, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1812**

(Vol. XV, No. 6319)  
p. 3, c. 1-2

FROM THE BUFFALO GAZETTE,  
*of October 13*

*Gallant and Daring Exploit.*—About 1 o’clock on Friday morning last, three armed boats with 102 men, crossed from this shore to Fort Erie on the opposite side, for the purpose of attacking two British vessels, the brig *Adams* of 6 guns, and the schr. *Caledonia* of 2 guns, at anchor near that place—one boat containing about 50 men, another between 40 and 50, the third 5 [6?] men—the first under the immediate direction of Lieut. Jesse D. Elliott, of the U.S. Navy, the second under that of Lieut. Watts, sailing master, and the third commanded by Capt. Cyrenus Chapin of this village. Owing to delay occasioned by the darkness of the night, the attack did not commence until about 3 o’clock: both vessels were boarded at nearly the same time and captured after a resistance of a few minutes. The cables were immediately cut and the vessels taken down the river. The *Caledonia* anchored near the Rock. The brig was carried by the current to the west side of Squaw Island, (about half a mile from Black Rock) and ran a ground [sic] at a short distance from the shore. When opposite the Rock, a heavy cannonading commenced from the batteries and flying artillery on the other shore, which was soon followed by a return from the vessels. The brig from her situation was much exposed. Those on board were notwithstanding safely landed on our own shore. The *Adams* was soon after retaken by the British, but the destructive fire of musketry from the island and our artillery on shore soon compelled them to abandon her. There is good reason to believe they lost a number of their men before they got off. About evening of the same day, she was taken possession of by some soldiers belonging to one of the U.S. Regiments, who found on board three men who whom their comrades in their hurry to get home again had forgotten to take

along with them. It being thought impracticable to keep possession of the Brig (a very hasty conclusion however we fear) she was set on fire and burnt to the water's edge.

This achievement does equal honor to both officers and men engaged in the expedition.

Return of the Prisoners of War, captured from the British on board the *Adams*:

Lt. Charles Larrabee, Hosea Blood, acting surgeon's mate; Nath. Heaton, Jos. Kneevy, corporals; Abijah Bradley, musician; Alfred Cobourn, John St. Clair, Robert Arbuckler, Adw. Carr, Leml. Parker, Job Winslow, Ichabod Farrar, John D. Jones, Zenas Clark, Joseph Hunt, Jon'n Colby, Chester Wilcox, Wm. D. Ausment, Alex. Brewin, Ed. Tuck, John Glover, privates; all of the 4<sup>th</sup> regt. U. S. In. who fought at Tippecanoe and Brownstown, and were on their march to Quebeck [sic].

In addition to the above there were taken on board the *Adams*, Dr. Sylvester Day, surgeon's mate, U.S. army, J. Cannon, 1<sup>st</sup> regt. artillery, and 4 others, volunteers. Four of the wounded which were left on board the brig, were carried by the enemy to fort Erie.

There were captured on board the *Adams*, Frederick Rolette, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Comdt. Thos. Kerr, Ensign of Marines, 10 Marines, 34 Canadian Voyagers, (French) and in the *Caledonia*, Robt. Ervin, master, 8 seamen and 4 Voyagers.

The boarding party had one killed and 8 or 10 wounded. A marine was killed a few hours afterwards, while unloading the *Caledonia*, by a cannon shot. The first shot from the British batteries, killed Major Cuyler, whose death is published in the succeeding columns.

A 24 pound ball passed through the house of Orange Dean. Another of 6 pound [sic] passed through the store of N. Sill & Co. About 300 shot were fired from the British batteries.

*From Detroit.*—From several of the American prisoners who were captured on board of the *Adams*, we have the following account from Detroit: —

The *Adams* left Malden on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and arrived at fort Erie on the 8<sup>th</sup>. They state that the expedition that went against Fort Wayne on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, had returned to Malden on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October unsuccessful—The expedition consisted of about 400 regulars and militia, and 1500 Indians—they had proceeded towards Fort Wayne until they came within 16 miles of an American army, which they learned from a prisoner, their Spies took, to be Harrison's. They then precipitately retreated, leaving much of their ammunition, &c. on the ground. It was understood at Malden, that Harrison was advancing on Detroit with his army. The *Queen Charlotte* was detained at Detroit, on account of the expected arrival of Gen. Harrison. At Detroit, much property had been destroyed by the Indians. The town was full of Indians. It is much that the Savages will massacre all the Americans at Detroit. The above gentleman did not learn that any Scalps were paid for by the British. The British commanders had in several instances ransomed American prisoners taken by the Indians.

## Text No. 2

*Municipality of Buffalo, New York : A History 1720 – 1923.* Editor in Chief: **Henry Wayland Hill, LL.D.**

President of Buffalo Historical Society; Member of the New York State Historical Association; Member of the American Historical Association; President of New York State Waterways Association; Secretary of New York State Champlain Tercentenary Commission, Compiler of Its Historical Reports; Knight of the National Legion of Honor of France; Author of “Water Supply” and “Waterways” in *Encyclopedia Americana*; Author of “Waterways and Canal Construction in the State of New York;” and of several other Historical Documents and Addresses; Contributor to the Bibliophile Edition of “Odes and Episodes of Horace,” Member of New York Constitutional Convention of 1894, of New York Assembly of 1896-1900, and of New York State Senate of 1901-1910.

Vol. I –II. (New York and Chicago: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1923)

**Jesse Elliott** : Vol. II, p. 934 (index) & Vol. I, pp. 120-121

**A Daring Exploit**—Early in October, 1812, a young naval officer, Lieutenant J. B. Elliott, had been sent to **Buffalo, or Black Rock**, to confer with General Van Rensselaer “concerning the building of a fleet to operate on Lake Erie.” He was young and venturesome, and the realization that two former American ships, the brig “Adams” of six guns, and the “Caledonia” of two guns, lay within what seemed easy reach, at Fort Erie anchorage, in the possession of the British, pained him so much that he resolved to retake them if possible. It is said that the plan he adopted was suggested to him by the Seneca chief, Farmer’s Brother. On the eve of October 8<sup>th</sup> he prepared for the attempt, cheered perhaps by a message from General Smyth, who prayed: “The God who protects the brave, guard you and give you success.” From Black Rock, at 1 o’clock in the morning of October 9<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Elliott set out with three boats. In one were fifty men, under his own command; in another a similar number under Lieutenant Wells; and in the third, six men under Captain Cyrenius Chaplin. Captain Sloan, of Black Rock, acted as pilot. The boats silently crossed, and at 3 o’clock both ships were simultaneously boarded. The surprise was complete. Elliott in his report stated: “In less than ten minutes, I had the prisoners all seized, the topsails were sheeted home, and the vessels under way.” However, the wind was light, and Elliott could not get the “Adams” (or “Detroit,” as she had been renamed) beyond the reach of the guns of Fort Erie. Finally he was forced to “cut his cable and set her adrift;” she grounded on the west side of Squaw Island. The “Caledonia” was beached successfully at Black Rock, but the “Adams” had to withstand the battering successively of the British and American guns. She was boarded by the British, but they were soon driven off by the American artillery “under Lieutenant-Colonel Winfield Scott.” At the end of the day she had become so badly riddled that she could not be floated. A few nights later Captain Chaplin brought off a long 12-pounder from the “Adams,” and the next day, Lieutenant Watts brought off another. These guns were placed in American earthworks, and “were the heaviest mounted up to that time.” Later, she was set afire by a detachment of United States infantry. The “Caledonia,” however, was a rich prize, her cargo being valued at \$200,000, and the ship subsequently became one of Perry’s fleet. Lieutenant Elliott captured fifty-eight men in the raid, including three commissioned officers, and also released twenty-seven Americans found on board. Elliott lost one man killed and four wounded. He especially commended the gallantry of Buffalo residents who accompanied him, naming Captain Chaplin, John Macomb, John Town (or

Tower), Thomas Davis, Peter Overstocks, and James Sloan. The success of Lieutenant Elliott's daring expedition had a depressing effect upon the British commander on the border; he, Sir Isaac Brock, expressed himself as follows regarding the exploit: "The event is particularly unfortunate and may reduce us to incalculable distress...."

### Text No. 3

*The Cabinet*  
(Shenectady, New York)

Wednesday , November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1813

(Vol. IV, No. 176[?])  
p. 6, c. 2

From the *Norwich Courier*.

### COMMODORE OLIVER H. PERRY

Who by his late brilliant achievement on Lake Erie, **has secured to himself the proudest niche in the Temple of Fame**, is the eldest son of Christopher Raymond Perry, esq. formerly of Newport, Rhode Island, but for some months a resident of this town. He commenced his naval career about the year 1798, as midshipman, and served a considerable time in that capacity on board the *General Greene*, of 32 guns, commanded by his father, and employed principally on the Havana station. On the reduction of the navy in 1801, many of the officers were thrown out of the service; but young Perry, notwithstanding the comparative inactivity of peaceful times, perseveringly continued in the profession he had chosen, passing through the various grades of promotion, until we find him in the winter of 1810-11, lieutenant and commander of the *Revenge* schooner, attached to commodore Rodgers' squadron, which wintered that season at New-London. Here he was continually under the eye of that able and accomplished officer, and received from him a full share of that confidence which he so eminently merited. A misfortune, however, overtook him while on this station. The *Revenge* in returning from Newport to New-London, in thick weather struck on Watch-hill reef, and went to pieces; but the crew were all saved, with most of her armaments. As is usual on such occasions a court of enquiry was instituted to investigate lieutenant Perry's conduct in that affair, and the result was a most honorable acquittal.

Lieutenant Perry was afterwards invested with the command of the U.S. flotilla at Newport, where he continued until some months after the breaking out of the present war, when he was appointed with the rank of master and commander, to the command of the naval forces on Lake Erie, which at that time consisted of a few small vessels only. And here his astonishing assiduity and unconquerable perseverance shone forth with a splendor, which fairly augured a brilliant result to all his complicated labors in the building and equipment of a force sufficient to cope with that of the enemy. Every nerve was strained for that purpose, artizans [sic] and sailors were sent forth from the Atlantic states, and we at length behold him sally forth to victory and to glory.

The importance of the late victory is immense, and the public joy on the occasion has been completely & unequivocally manifested by the sound of artillery, the chiming of bells, and brilliant illuminations from one extremity of the country to the other.

**Commodore Perry has three brothers also in the navy, two of whom are lieutenants on board the *President*; and the other the younger, about 13 years of age, was on board the *Lawrence*, serving as a midshipman, in the late glorious battle,** and was the only one of that class of officers who was not either killed or wounded. It seems, in fact, almost a miracle that in the midst of such horrible carnage, when so many gallant fellows took their way to the “world of spirits,” both brothers should escape unhurt.

Commodore Perry is now **but little more than 28 years of age**, having been born in **August, 1785**. He was married a few years since, to a very beautiful and accomplished young lady—Miss Mason, daughter of the late Dr. Mason, of Newport, by whom he has one son.

#### Test No. 4

Lawrence J. Friedman and David Curtis Skaggs, “Jesse Duncan Elliott and the Battle of Lake Erie: The Issue of Mental Stability,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Winter 1990), 10, p. 497, footnote 7:

“While researching a full-length biography of Jesse Elliott, Professor David Long of the University of New Hampshire found evidence that **Elliott was born July 14, 1782**, rather than the conventional date of 1785. We are grateful to Professor Long for this information.”

#### Text No. 5

*The Columbian*  
(New York City)

**Thursday , November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1813**

(Vol. IV, No. 1246)  
p. 2, c. 4-5

*From the Buffalo Gazette.*  
PUBLIC DINNER.

At a meeting of a number of **citizens of Buffalo**, on the 24<sup>th</sup> ult. convened for the purpose of making arrangements for a *Public Dinner* to be given to gen. Harrison and **com. Perry**, and their officers,

Col. C. CHAPIN, chairman,  
H. B. POTTER, esq. sec’y.

Resolved, that a committee of arrangement, consisting of seven persons, be appointed, for the purpose above specified, and that Cyrenius Chapin, Jonas Barker, Ebenezer Walden, Seth Grosvener, Joshua Lovejoy, Frederick Miller, and Heman B. Potter, be that Committee.

C. CHAPIN, chairman,  
H. B. POTTER, esq. sec’y.

In pursuance of the above resolution, a sumptuous *Dinner* was prepared at Pomeroy’s Eagle Tavern, on the 25<sup>th</sup>, at very short notice, but which gave general satisfaction. At 2

o'clock, gen. Harrison, com. Perry, and about 80 officers of the army and navy, and a number of respectable citizens sat down to dinner—gen. P. B. Porter, officiated as president, assisted by col. Chapin; judge Townsend, and Dr. J. Trowbridge, as vice-presidents. At 4 o'clock, the following toasts were drank [sic], accompanied by 18 guns.

#### TOASTS

1. The American Navy—Its morning splendor has confounded its enemies—its meridian radiance will consume them.
2. The American Army—After a night of darkness its sun has at length arisen in the west.
3. The President of the U.S.
4. Our Country—May its happiness be as extensive as its empire—its glory unbounded as creation.
5. The memory of gen. Washington—dear to every true American.
6. The departed heroes, Pike, Lawrence and others, who have fought and died in defence of their country—May their memories ever be cherished by a grateful people.
7. The governor of the state of New-York.
8. The secretaries of war and the navy.
9. Com. Chauncey—He has deserved victory if he has not achieved it.
10. **Capt. Jesse D. Elliott—One of the brightest ornaments of our navy.**
11. Col. Richard M. Johnson—The hero of the Thames.
12. A free navigation from Quebec to New-Orleans, by the Lakes—Our army is establishing the outlines of the work; the enterprise and industry of our farmers will shortly complete it.
13. The war—May it terminate in an acknowledgment of our rights and a redress of our wrongs.
14. The American Fair—Let the young soldier remember that they will not love him for the same qualities he prizes in them.
15. **Our own Lake Erie—Enriched by nature with scenes of beauty and fertility; it is now more endeared to us, as the splendid theatre of national glory.**
16. Our red brethren of the west—Their sins have been great—but we are men and christians [sic]; let us forgive and forget them.
17. The inhabitants of Canada—We fight not to conquer them, but the policy which made them our enemies. May they soon be united to the American Republic.
18. *Proctor* and *Yeo*—Full blooded racers, swiftest on the course.

#### VOLUNTEER TOASTS

*The following are selected from the volunteer Toasts drank [sic] after dinner.*

By general Harrison.

**Our naval supremacy on the lakes**—May its importance be felt, and our government be always determined to retain it.

**By commodore Perry.**

His excellency governor Shelby—His patriotism unequalled, his heroism never surpassed.

By colonel Anderson.

A better regulated army, and foreign influence! —A speedy improvement to the *former*; and everlasting banishment from the American continent to the *latter*.

By colonel Ball.

**The town of Buffalo—The hospitality of its citizens will be recollected with delight by the war-worn soldier.**

By lieutenant Holdup.

The late commander of the United States brig *Argus*—who fell gloriously defending his vessel against a superior force.

By H. B. Potter, esq.

**May the crimsoned waters of Erie intermix with the waters of the Atlantic and silence the tune of “Britannia rules the waves.”**

By captain Brevoort.

The memory of those departed heroes—who fell on the ever memorable 10<sup>th</sup> of September.

By C. Townsend, esq.

Our little navy—one of the modern wonders of the world, unlike the useless pyramids and colossus of the ancients—may its fame already as extensive be even more durable.

By colonel Miller.

The State of New-York—the seat of the arts and sciences.

By Joshua Lovejoy.

The American Eagle—May he hold the British Lion and the Lilly of France in his talons, until the former expires in his grasp, and the latter withers under the sun of American independence.

By judge Z. Barker.

**May party spirit and all animosities be buried in the bottomless pit for ten thousand years.**

By general Porter—

Major-general Harrison having retired.

General Harrison—The accomplished soldier and scholar of the woods.

By colonel Chapin—com. Perry having retired.

**Commodore Perry—The pattern of modesty and heroism.**

After the toasts a number of patriotic songs were sung, and the evening passed away with great glee and hilarity.

### Text No. 6

*The Ohio Repository*  
(Canton, Ohio)

**Thursday evening, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1815**

(Vol. I, No. 11)  
p. 2, c. 4

*Naval Court of Enquiry*

WASHINGTON-CITY, May 4.

The following is the opinion of the Court of Enquiry, held on board the U. S. sloop of war *Ontario*, in the harbour of New-York, in pursuance of the following orders:

NAVY DEPARTMENT,  
April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1845.

SIR—It has been stated in this department, that, by the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry in Great Britain, ordered to investigate the causes of the loss of the British Fleet on Lake Erie, on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1813, the conduct of capt. J. D. Elliott, of the U. S. navy, who commanded the brig *Niagara* on that day, is misrepresented; justice to the reputation of capt. Elliott, and to the navy of the U. S. requires that a true statement of facts, in relation to his conduct on that occasion, be exhibited to the world. —The Court, therefore, of which you are President, will immediately proceed to enquire into the same, to ascertain the part he sustained in the action of that day, and report its opinion thereon to this department.

I am very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
B. W. CROWNINSHIELD  
Com. ALEX'R MURRAY, New-York.

The Court of Enquiry convened at the request of capt. Jesse D. Elliott, having deliberately examined all the evidence produced before them, on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. in which he bore so conspicuous a part, sincerely regret that there should have been any diversity of opinion, respecting the events of that day, and imperious duty compels the Court to promulgate testimony that appears, materially, to vary in some of its important points. The Court, however, feel convinced, that the attempts to wrest from capt. Elliott the laurels he gained in that splendid victory, as second in command, under that gallant and highly meritorious officer capt. Perry, ought in no wise to lessen him in the opinion of his fellow-citizens, as a brave and skilful officer—and that the charge made in the proceedings of the British Court Martial, by which capt. Barclay was tried, of his attempting to withdraw from the battle, is malicious and unfounded in fact. **On the contrary, it has been proved to the satisfaction of this court, that the enemy's ship, *Queen Charlotte*, bore off from the fire of the *Niagara*, commanded by capt. Elliott.**

ALEX'R MURRAY; *Pres't.*  
H. WHEATON, *Judge adv.*

Approved,

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

**Text No. 7**

*The Connecticut Journal*  
(New-Haven)  
**Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1819**

**Vol. LII, no. 2760**  
p. 3, c. 2-3

**COMMODORE PERRY**

This gallant officer is no more—his sudden death deprives the American Navy of an able commander; society of a valuable member; and the nation, of one of her most distinguished citizens.

During the last summer, Commodore Perry was designated by the Government, to an “active command in the American seas.” Says the *Washington City Gazette*, there is reason to believe that, at the time of his death, the object of his cruise had not been completed. That object, as we have heard it suggested, was one which required great delicacy as well as vigor in the execution; for us has been supposed, it combined a clearing of the neighboring seas of pirates with a due respect for vessels of war acting *bona fide* under the patrol flags. The last employment of this gallant officer, therefore, was a high compliment to the discriminating powers of his mind as well as to his professional skill and courage.”

We have devoted a considerable portion of our paper to the accounts of his death and are satisfied that nothing can be more interesting to our readers at the moment, than the following Biographical sketch, from the *Baltimore Morning Chronicle*. It will be seen that the distinguished subject of this article, was born at Newport, (R.I.) in august 1785—“In 1811, or ’12, he was married to Miss Mason, of the same place, daughter of Dr. Mason, and niece of Christopher Champlain esq. of the U.S. Senate.”

It may afford some consolation to this lady, to reflect that the sympathies of the nation will mingle with hers on this melancholy occasion.

“*Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry*.—One of our naval heroes, and first in the annals of American history who gained a victory where fleet was opposed to fleet, has now paid the debt of nature. *OLIVER HAZARD PERRY*, is no more. There is something deficient in a character, however illustrious, until it receives the consecration of death. However eminent a man may be for his talents or for his virtues distinguished by his public and private services—luminous with intellect, renowned for bravery, or adorned by the less dazzling, but more endearing qualities of the heart; however much beloved by his friends, or idolized by his country, respected both at home and abroad, *still while he lives*, envy will attempt to pull him down from the lofty column of public admiration which forms his pedestal, to the humble platform on which he stands. **But when death touches with his wand of ebony a character so resplendent—when it is converted as by magic into dust and ashes, and seems to implore nothing but a few feet of earth to moulder away in quietude and silence, while the cold dews of night hang over his head, and nothing but insensate marble marks the spot where he slumbers—envy shrinks with abhorrence from the sanctuary of the dead, and death canonizes and consecrates the character. It is then, and only then, that the virtues begin to gleam and twinkle with a star-like radiance, thro’ the interposing shadows of the tomb—they then shine from their proper sphere; they are set beyond human reach in the broad expanding and over-arching firmament of fame.**

“We hope that the following slight biographic sketch of the departed hero, drawn from the most authentic source, will not be deemed uninteresting. *Oliver Hazard Perry*, was the son of Christopher Raymond Perry, and was born in Newport, (R.I.) on the 23d of August, 1785. His father had borne an honorable part, both by sea and land, in the revolutionary battles of his country; he was from his maternal side, descended in a direct line from *Sir William Wallace*, so renowned in the history of Scotland. In April 1799, he received a midshipman’s warrant, and was attached to the U.S. Ship *Gen. Green*, under the command of his father, until the reduction of the navy. On the breaking out of the Tripolitan war, he was ordered to join the *Adams*, commanded by capt. Campbell, with whom he continued until commodore Preble was superseded by Commodore Morris, when he returned to the frigate *New-York* to the United states, during which cruise he was promoted to an acting lieutenantcy. In 1804, under his old commander, capt. Campbell of the *Constellation*, he joined our squadron at Malta, where he remained until by orders of that officer he entered as first lieutenant on board of the

*Nautilus*, to which vessel he was attached until commodore Rodgers assumed the command of the squadron—He remained in this station until the conclusion of the peace with Tripoli, when the commodore shifted his flag from the *Constitution* to the *Essex*, and took *Oliver Hazard Perry* with him to the United States in the capacity of second lieutenant. During the embargo, he was appointed to the command of 17 gun-boats, then lying at Newport—and in 1810, he superceded [sic] capt. Jones in the command of the U.S. schooner *Revenge*, attached to the squadron of commodore Rodgers, lying at New-London. This schooner was lost off the port above mentioned, a court of inquiry investigated all the facts of the case, by whom the conduct of the commanding officer was highly applauded—his cool and intrepid conduct on that occasion endeared him more than ever to the cabinet. On the breaking out of the late war with G. Britain, he was ordered to take the command of the U. S. Flotilla pointed with the rank of Master commandant to the command of the U.S. naval forces on Lake Erie.

“Here we deem it needless to pursue him further—what now follows is a matter of American history—he stands in the full sun-light of glory—the admiration of his countrymen constitutes his best panegyric: his bravery during that perilous engagement for the acquisition of victory, could only be rivalled by his humanity to the vanquished afterwards. This is an event that will not be forgotten; **he has made the waves of that mighty lake the rolling monuments of his glory.** With regard to the softer, the more delicate, the domestic affections—those that shun the blaze of public admiration and count privacy and shade, those that may be denominated the tendrils of the human heart, they wound themselves around all his sturdy and more independent qualities—the grandeur of the oak was enlivened and decorated by the blossoms and the fragrance of the woodbine that unfolded its trunk and crept in spiral ringlets around its branches. But of what avail is its glory—the same destroying angel that now hovers over Baltimore, has made the son of victory her victim: she has denied him even the sad privilege of a grave in the land of his ancestors—neither his family, his widow, his friends, nor his countrymen can point out his tomb to the inquiring stranger, and say, here slumbers the ashes of the Hero of Erie.

### Text No. 8

*The Providence Gazette*  
(Providence, R. I.)

**Saturday morning, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1819**

**Vol. LV, No. 2911**  
p. 1, c. 3-4

***Biographical and Obituary Notice***  
**OF THE LATE LAMENTED**  
**COM. OLIVER H. PERRY.**

**From the Norfolk Beacon.**

OLIVER HAZARD PERRY eldest son of Christopher Raymond Perry, Esq. was born at Newport\* [*Footnote*: \*A mistake—he was born at South-Kingstown.] (R.I.) in August, 1785. In 1798 when in his fourteenth year, his father, then commander of the sloop of war the *General Greene*, procured for him a midshipman’s warrant, and initiated him into the service of the U. States, on board his own vessel. When afterwards the *General Greene* was out of commission, young Perry was transferred to the squadron which shortly sailed for the

Mediterranean. In the Tripolitan war he had an opportunity of seeing active service; and, though no chance brought it in his way to particularly to distinguish himself, he is believed to have acquitted himself so well as to gain the favor of the officers under whom he served; and to have secured by his private virtues the warm friendship of associates. —The squadron returned home, and several years elapsed, in which no event worth relating occurred; he was sedulously engaged in his profession to which he was entirely devoted; rose gradually until in 1810, a Lieutenant, he was given the command of the *Revenge*, one of the vessels of Commodore Rodgers' squadron, then raking the Sound to enforce the embargo. In the following spring, during a thick fog, the *Revenge* was carried upon Watch Hill reef (which is opposite Stoney Town) and went to pieces. It will be remembered, that the Court of Enquiry which was held at his request in respect to the disaster, highly approved his conduct; for it appeared that the disaster was unavoidable, and that after the *Revenge* was wrecked it was owing to his intrepidity and presence of mind, that most of the guns and other munitions on board were saved. Indeed his conduct had the approbation of the nation. It was soon after this event that he married Miss Mason, of Newport, an amiable lady, now his widow, with several children, who mourn his death.

In the beginning of 1812, he was appointed to the command of the flotilla of gun-boats in the harbor of New-York, on which station he had little to do, but to drill and discipline his men. Of this monotonous and inglorious service he soon grew impatient; and a request which he made to the Secretary of the Navy, for more active employment, was granted him, in an order to repair to Sacketts' Harbour, with a reinforcement of sailors for the navy on the lakes, under Com. Chauncey. With his band of volunteers he made his way to the Harbour, in the depth of winter; and soon after his arrival, was detached by the Commodore **to Erie, a port on the lake, of that name**, to take the command of the force on the lake, which was then small; and to superintend the building of two additional brigs of 20 guns each, one of which was named the *Lawrence*, and the other the *Niagara*. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of August following, his vessels having been made ready, Com. Perry succeeded with much difficulty, and in the face of the British force, in getting the squadron over the bar at the mouth of the harbour, and sailed the next day, on a cruise, from which the squadron returned on the 8<sup>th</sup>. **On the 12<sup>th</sup>, having been reinforced by the brave Captain Elliott (whose gallantry in the capture of two British vessels, the first night he arrived on the station, under the very guns of Fort Malden, is fresh in the recollection of every body) and 90 sailors, he set sail in quest of the enemy.** The details of the memorable battle which soon followed, are so well known and so well remembered, that we consider it superfluous to dwell upon them. It has always seemed to us that no commander ever more truly deserved the credit of a victory, than did Commodore Perry, at Put-in-Bay. We know of no battle fought with more skill or more gallantry than this. That he volunteered immediately afterwards, and fought on land with General Harrison, is not forgotten. Nor does it accord with the limits we have proposed to ourselves, to go over the few occurrences of interest in his life, since the peace. Suffice it to say, that he has still shewn himself diligent in the service, worthy the confidence and esteem of his country.

The object of his mission at Augustura was fulfilled. When about to sail, he had a slight attack of fever; notwithstanding which, he re-embarked. The fever continued with increasing violence, until the arrival of the *Nonesuch* at the Gulf of Oronoco, when it had come to its crisis. He was removed to the *John Adams*, on board of which vessel in about a quarter of an hour afterwards he expired. On the day following his death, his body was carried on shore, and every attention of humanity and respect was paid by the civil and military authorities, and the inhabitants of the town of Port Spain.

At 4 o'clock, P. M. the 3d West India Regiment was marched to the King's Wharf, to receive the corpse, and, about 5 o'clock, the boat, with the body, left the *John Adams*, that ship firing minute guns until its arrival at the wharf, when Fort St. Andrew commenced the same ceremony, which continued until the procession reached the burying ground. The following was the order of procession:

The Chief of Police and his Deputy.

The 3d West-India Regiment, with arms reversed—the Officers with white scarfs and hat-bands.

The Band of the Regiment, playing the Dead March in Band.

The Commandant of the Garrison and his Staff, with scarfs and hat-bands.

Alcaides	T	Alcaides
of	H	of
Barrios.	E	Barrios.
Three		Three
Officers	B	Officers
on Horseback,	O	on Horseback,
as	D	as
Bearers	Y.	Bearers

#### CHIEF MOURNERS.

The Officers of the *John Adams* and *Nonsuch*, two and two.

A great number of respectable inhabitants, as mourners, two and two.

One hundred and twenty men of the crews of the *John Adams* and *Nonsuch*, two and two.

On arriving at the entrance to the burying ground, the troops filed off, and formed a line for the procession to pass through. The funeral service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Clapham, in a solemn and impressive manner; and after the body was committed to the grave, the troops fired three volleys [sic] of musketry in the usual manner—the whole body of attendants on the funeral retiring from the burying ground with every mark of sympathetic grief for the premature death of a gallant man, and a good parent and citizen, increased by the consideration of his eminent rank in society. his personal appearance was imposing, having been a man of large stature.

The following was handed by the officers to be published:

“The officers of the United States' vessels *John Adams* and *Nonsuch*, under their grateful acknowledgments to the inhabitants of Port Spain, for their kind and respectful attention to the funeral rites bestowed on the body of their late commander, Commodore PERRY. The disposition manifested by all classes was highly in unison with their feelings, and merits their warmest thanks.”

As soon as Lieutenant Claxton arrived at Washington with the news of the death of our brave and lamented countryman, orders were issued from the Navy Department, to the several Naval and Marine officers, to pay the customary tributes of respect to his memory, by hoisting the flags at half mast, firing minute guns, and causing the officers of their respective commands to wear crape on the left arm, during thirty days.

## Text No. 9

*New-York Spectator*  
(New-York City)

**Tuesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1821**

**Vol. XXIV, No. 60**  
**[p. 1, c. 3]**

*Letter from Captain Elliott to Captain Perry.*  
[no date affixed]

Sir: Communications which I have recently been made me, and exact copies of which I herewith enclose you, render it necessary that I should hear from you immediately. As soon as I heard of your late visit to Washington, I lost no time in hurrying off from this place, with a hope that we should meet, and settle those differences which have so long existed; your sudden, and to me unexpected, departure from that city, prevented the contemplated meeting; and my orders to sit on a court martial, in Baltimore, which detained me from this place longer than I at first expected, has induced me to return to Virginia; and instead of the personal interview, which had alone carried me from home, and which I had so anxiously hoped for would take place, now compels me to address you at a moment when it might seem as if prompted by the late public investigation of your Mediterranean command.

The wrongs which I have suffered, are many; and after taking a retrospect of all the transactions connected with our affairs which have been made public, I am at a loss to know, how it was possible you could have made such representations as are connected in the certificates herewith enclosed. Immediately after the action on Lake Erie, you must recollect, that reports prejudicial to my character, were put in circulation; when I called on you for a written contradiction of them, (your answer, I presume, is in your possession,) you say in your letter, "You have no fault to find with myself, officers and crew—compliment me by saying, you are indebted in a great measure for the victory, to my bringing the small vessels into close action;" and conclude, with a positive assertion, that the *Niagara* would, from her superior order, have taken the *Queen Charlotte* in 20 minutes, had she not made sail and engaged the *Lawrence*.

What, sir, has since occurred, to draw from you such base, false and malicious reports, as contained in the certificates enclosed? I will conclude my remarks with one or two observations, and permit you to draw such inferences as your feelings of honor may dictate; hoping that you will never again have occasion, either in the society of the ladies, or that of young navy officers, to make use of expressions of a similar nature, and which, too, intended to my injury.—Pry, sir, has your memory been so treacherous as to fail recollecting an interview at Erie, and that you then said, "if I would not dwell on the action, that you would write a private letter to the hon. secretary of the navy, and express your surprise that the country did not give me half the honor in the victory."

With proper respect,

J. D. ELLIOTT.

Capt. O. H. Perry, &c.

**Text No. 10***(ibid.)*

[p. 1, c. 3-4]

***To the Post Master, Erie Station, New-York, for Captain Elliott.***

[Captain Elliott's particular station not being known at this time, you are requested to forward the enclosed to him in such manner as it will be sure to reach him, and you will oblige his friend,

M. G. R. RUSSELL.]

It is with the deepest regret that the friends of merit observe how much you have been overlooked in the late engagement on Lake Erie.—You are bound, in justice to yourself, to lay before your country and the world your own share of the glory of that day. You may rest assured, that Perry is endeavoring to rob you of *all*. I have a correspondent who resides in Newport, and who heard Perry say, in a private circle, when he was representing the action, that when he went on board the *Niagara*, he found you pale and trembling like an aspin leaf, and all your officers, and that it was with great difficulty he could get you to obey his commands. Although I have not the honor of your acquaintance, I feel bound, by my attachment to worth and gallantry, to give you this information, trusting to your honor as a gentleman and an officer, not to betray me; for my friends would highly condemn a step of the [illegible], and Perry, too, knows my handwriting. But I feel confident you will confine this information to your own breast; it is only for your benefit that I give it.

It would afford me much pleasure to know that you have received this in safety. If you wish to acknowledge the receipt, direct to “Miss Mary G. R. Russell, Petersburg, Virginia.”

**Text No. 11***(ibid.)*

[p. 1, c. 4]

***Captain Perry's Reply to Captain Elliott.*  
NEWPORT, (Rhode Island,) June 18, 1818.**

Sir: The letter which I have lately received from you has evidently been written for the purpose of being exhibited to your friends, and in the hope that, passing without reply, it might gain credit among those upon whom you have long been in the habit of practicing similar impositions. You had much reason, sir, to indulge in such a hope.

**It is humiliating to be under the necessity of replying to any letters written by a person who so little becomes a gentleman.** I must not, however, permit you to derive from my silence any countenance to the gross falsehood contained in your letter, and which it would be an affectation of decorum to call by any other name; such, particularly, is the absurd declaration you impute to me in the close of it, and **the perverted account you give** of the manner in which **I was once induced** to write a letter in your favor. How imprudent as well as base, is it in you, by such misrepresentations, to reduce me to the necessity of reminding

you of **the abject condition in which I had previously found you**, and by which I was moved to afford you all the countenance in my power; sick, (or pretending to be sick) in bed, in consequence of distress of mind, declaring that you had missed the fairest opportunity of distinguishing yourself that ever man had, and lamenting so piteously the loss of your reputation, that I was prompted to make almost any effort to relieve you from the shame which seemed to overwhelm you. This, you very well know, was the origin of the certificate [sic] I then granted you; and that your letter to me, (of which you once furnished a false copy for publication, and which you now represent as making a *demand* upon me,) was merely an introduction to mine.

Another motive I had, which you could not appreciate, but which I urged with success on the other officers; it resulted from a strong, and I then hoped pardonable, desire that the public eye might only rest upon the gallant conduct of the fleet, and not be attracted to its blemishes, as I feared it would be by the irritation excited by your conduct among the officers and men, most of whom, I hoped, had acquired sufficient honor to gratify their ambition, even should that honor be shared by some one who might less deserve it.

The expressions stated in your two certificates to have been made use of by me, when speaking of your manly conduct, were probably the most lenient I have for a long time employed when called upon to express my opinion of you; and, thoroughly known as, you must be conscious, your character is to me, **it was quite needless for you to have procured certificates of the contempt with which I have spoken of you**. You might readily, however, have furnished much more simple ones, and of a much earlier date, than those it has suited you to produce; for you allowed but little time to elapse, after receiving the benefits of my letter, before your falsehoods and intrigues against me, made me fully sensible of the error I had committed in endeavoring to prop so unprincipled a character.

If it be really true that you hurried to Washington for the purpose of inviting me to a meeting, it is indeed unfortunate that intentions for which you give yourself so great credit, have evaporated in a pitiful letter, which none but a base and vulgar mind could have dictated. The reputation you have lost is not to be recovered by such sacrifices; it was tarnished by your own behavior on Lake Erie, and has constantly been rendered more desperate by your subsequent folly and habitual falsehoods. You cannot wonder at the loss: that reputation which has neither honor, nor truth, nor courage, for its basis, must ever be of short duration. Mean and despicable as you have proved yourself to be, I shall never cease to criminate myself for having deviated from the path of strict propriety, for the sake of screening you from public contempt and indignation. For this offence to the community I will atone, in due time, by a full disclosure of your disgraceful conduct. But that you, of all men, should exultingly charge me with an error committed in your favor, and by which you were (as far as a man in your situation could be) saved from disgrace, is a degree of turpitude of which I had before no conception.

O. H. P.

**Text No. 12**

(*ibid.*)

[p. 2, c. 2

In the battle of the 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1813, on Lake Erie, between the American squadron commanded by commodore Perry, and the British squadron under commodore Barclay, the action began when the two squadrons were about a mile apart, by a firing commenced by the enemy; the signal having been made by com. Perry, for our vessels to engage as they came up, each against the enemy's vessel, as designated in previous orders, which made the *Queen Charlotte* the antagonist of the *Niagara*, commanded by capt. Elliott. It was understood by the American officers, before the fight, that it was capt. Perry's intention to bring the enemy to close action as soon as possible. The *Lawrence* accordingly closed with the *Detroit* very soon. The *Queen Charlotte* made sail for assisting the *Detroit*. The *Niagara* might have relieved the *Lawrence* from the *Queen Charlotte's* fire, if she had made proper exertions to bring her to close action; but, by keeping her maintopsail [sic] aback, and her jib brailed up, she kept at too great a distance from the enemy to do him any material injury, and sustained scarcely any herself until the commodore took command of her, who immediately bore up and passed through the enemy's line, firing both his broadsides with such tremendous effect, as compelled him instantly to surrender.

It was the general opinion of the American officers, and expressed with much indignation, that captain Elliott did not do his duty in the battle, as a gallant and faithful officer; inasmuch as he did not bring his vessel, as soon as he might have done, into close action, which circumstance only made the result of the battle for a short time doubtful. Soon after the victory, captain Elliott's conduct was spoken of, as well in general Harrison's army as in the fleet, with great disapprobation and censure. Captain Perry heard of it, and spoke to me of it one evening; said that he was sorry reports were in circulation so ruinous to captain Elliott's reputation—wished they might be silenced, and desired me to go on shore to the camp, and do all I could, with propriety, to counteract them—I did so accordingly, the next morning. He said the American flag had gained much honor that day, and he wished all his companions in battle to share it with him. Several weeks after this, captain Perry told me, that captain Elliott wished him to alter that part of his official report, which stated that the *Niagara* did not, until a late period of the engagement, get into close action—and asked me whether I thought that part of his report incorrect, as it had been agreed to leave the question to be decided by two commissioned officers of the fleet, [lieutenant Edwards who was present, and myself being the officers selected.] I answered, I thought that part of his official report was entirely correct, to which lieutenant Edwards assented.

Some time after capt. Perry left the Lake and when the squadron was under capt. Elliott's command, he applied to me and repeatedly urged me to give him a certificate respecting his conduct in battle. He said that his only reason for wishing one, was to have it in his power to calm his wife's uneasiness, who had heard that his conduct had been questioned; and declared to me upon his honor, that he would make no other use of it than as a means of relieving her unhappiness. Thus delicately and unpleasantly situated, I wrote such a certificate as I thought I might, for such an occasion venture to give capt. Elliott. DAN. TURNER.

Sworn to before,  
HOLMES WEAVER, *Jus. Peace.*

### Text No. 13

*The New-York Evening Post*  
(No. 49 William Street)

**Tuesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1821**

**No. 5811**  
p. 2, c. 1-2

*From the Washington City Gazette, Jan. 31.*  
**TO THE PUBLIC.**

The following letters and documents, are reluctantly submitted to an intelligent public—They were written after the action between the American and British fleets, on Lake Erie.

It is reasonable to suppose, that nothing material to it was omitted. The part I bore, in that memorable action, was presented to the public, without my knowledge, by Commodore Perry, with whom I then stood in the relation of friendship, and by others, who were witnesses of my conduct, and could not mistake the degree of merit due to me. As men of honor, they spontaneously defended mine, when rumour's mildew breath attempted to wither it. For such generous and liberal efforts, I then felt, and still feel, that gratitude, which magnanimity alone can inspire. The public mind had weighed and appreciated the actions of every man, whose happy lot it was to be in that engagement. Congress, with a knowledge of all the facts, bestowed us high and imperishable honors; and the legislatures of several states, with no less knowledge of the subject, decreed, with distinguished approbation, theirs.

These letters and documents are not voluntarily offered; compulsion, which I could not for[e]see, or for[e]seeing, could not control, has made this course absolutely necessary to maintain my reputation. The pamphlet lately published was designed to inflict a deliberate and incurable wound on it, if it has not effected its avowed object, it is because the informed and dispassionate judgment of the public would not be misled, or deceived; or because a generous motive suspended its decision, until all facts should be fairly, and without disguise, published.

In this statement, no enmity against any person is indulged—no animosity to the living throws a shade over it, and no aspirations on the memory of the dead dishonor it—all differences between Commodore Perry and myself terminated with his lamented death. His letters, published in his lifetime, and those published since his death, show the different feelings and circumstances under which they were written, and the change wrought by them, as to the relation in which we stood to each other. They give the text and the commentary.

This publication closes, forever, this subject. Public opinion, the good of the service, the station I hold, self-respect, and a disposition to forget and forgive injustice, urge forcibly the necessity of such a determination.

J. D. ELLIOTT

Washington, Jan. 31, 1820

**No. 1.**

*Copy of letter from Commodore Perry to the Secretary of the Navy.*

U.S. schr. *Ariel*, Put-in Bay, **Sept. 13, 1813**

Sir: In my last I informed you that we had captured the enemy's fleet on this lake. I have now the honor to give you the most important particulars of the action. On the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. at sunrise, they were discerned from Put-in Bay, where I lay at anchor with the squadron

under my command. We got under way, the wind light at S.W. and stood for them. At 10 A.M. the wind hauled to S.E. and brought us to the windward; formed the line and bore us. At 15 minutes before 12 the enemy commenced firing; at 5 minutes before 12, the action commenced on our part. Finding their fire very destructive, owing to their long guns, and it being mostly directed at the *Lawrence*, I made sail and directed the other vessels to follow, for the purpose of closing with the enemy. Every brace and bowline being shot away, she became unmanageable, notwithstanding the great exertions of the sailing master. In this situation she sustained the action upwards of 2 hours within grape and canister distance, until every gun was rendered useless, and the greater part of the crew either killed or wounded.— Finding she could no longer annoy the enemy, I left her in charge of Lt. Yarnall, who I was convinced, from the bravery already displayed by him, would do what would comport with the honor of the flag. **At half past 2 the wind springing up, capt. [sic] Elliott was enabled to bring his vessel, the *Niagara*, gallantly into close action; I immediately went on board of her, when he anticipated my wish by volunteering to bring the schooners which had been kept astern by the lightness of the wind, into close action.** It was with unspeakable pain that I saw, soon after I got on board the *Niagara*, the flag of the *Lawrence* come down, although I was perfectly sensible that she had been defended to the last, and that to continue to make a shew of resistance would have been a wanton sacrifice of the remains of her brave crew. But the enemy was not able to take possession of her, and circumstances soon permitted her flag again to be hosted [sic].

At 45 minutes past 2, the signal was made for “close action.” The *Niagara* being very little injured, I determined to pass through the enemy’s line, bore up and passed ahead of their two ships and a brig, giving a raking fire to them from the starboard guns, and to a larger schooner and sloop from the larboard side, at half pistol shot distance. The smaller vessels at this time having got within grape and canister distance, under the direction of *Captain Elliott*, and keeping up a well directed fire, the two ships, a brig and schooner surrendered, a schooner and a sloop making a vain attempt to escape.

Those officers and men who were under my immediate observation evinced the greatest gallantry, and I have no doubt that all others conducted themselves as became American officers and seamen. Lieut. Yarnall, first of the *Lawrence*, although several times wounded, refused to quit the deck. Midshipman Forrest (doing duty as lieutenant) and Sailing Master Taylor, were of great assistance to me. I have great pain in stating to you the death of Lieut. Brooks of the marines, and Midshipman Laub, both of the *Lawrence*, and Midshipman John Clarke of the *Scorpion*; they were valuable and promising officers. Mr. Hambleton, purser, who volunteered his services on deck, was severely wounded late in the action. Midshipmen Claxton and Swartwout of the *Lawrence*, were severely wounded. On board the *Niagara*, Lieutenants Smith and Edwards, and Midshipman Webster, [doing duty as sailing master,] behaved in a very handsome manner.

Capt. Brevoort, of the army, who acted as a volunteer in the capacity of marine officer, on board that vessel, is an excellent and brave officer, and with his musketry did great execution. Lieut. Turner, commanding the *Caledonia*, brought that vessel into action in the most able manner, and is an officer that in all situations may be relied on. The *Ariel*, lieut. Packet, and *Scorpion*, sailing master Champlin, were enabled to get early into action, and were of great service. **Capt. Elliott speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Magrath, purser, who had been dispatched in a boat on service, previous to my getting on board the *Niagara*; and being a seaman, since the action, has rendered essential service in taking charge of one of the prizes. Of Captain Elliott, already so well known to the government, it would be almost**

**superfluous to speak. In this action he evinced his characteristic bravery and judgment, and, since the close of the action, has given me the most able and essential assistance.**

I have the honor to enclose you a return of the killed and wounded, together with a statement of the relative force of the squadrons. The captain and first lieutenant of the *Queen Charlotte*, and the first lieutenant of the *Detroit*, were killed; captain Barclay, senior officer, and the commander of the *Lady Prevost*, severely wounded; the commander of the *Hunter* and *Chippeway*, slightly wounded. The loss in killed and wounded I have not yet been able to ascertain; it must, however, have been very great.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant, O. H. PERRY,  
*Hon. Wm. Jones, Secretary of the Navy.*

A true copy of a letter on file.

BENJ. HOMANS.

**No. 2.**

*Copy of a letter from Commander Perry, to Captain Elliott.*

U. S. schr. *Ariel*, Put-in Bay, Sept. 18, 1813.

My Dear Sir—I received your note last evening, after I had turned in, or I should have answered it immediately. I am indignant that any report should be circulated prejudicial to your character, as respects the action of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. It affords me great pleasure that I have it in my power to assure you, that the conduct of yourself, officers and crew, were such as to meet my warmest approbation. And I consider the circumstances of your volunteering to bring the small vessels into close action, as contributing largely to our victory. I shall ever believe it a premeditated plan to destroy our commanding vessel. I have no doubt, had not the *Queen Charlotte* have ran [sic] from the *Niagara*, from the superior order I observed her in, she would have taken her in twenty minutes.

With sentiments of esteem, I am, dear sir, your friend and obedient servant.

O. H. PERRY.

Capt. J. D. ELLIOTT.

**No. 3.**

Dear Sir—I am sorry to hear of your indisposition; leave the *Niagara* in charge of Lieut. Edwards; come on shore and make yourself comfortable—we shall sail this evening for Buffalo. Yours, very truly, O. H. PERRY.

Capt. Elliott, commanding the *Niagara*.

[This note was written the evening previous to leaving the Lake, 25<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1813.]

**No. 4.**

Letter from Lieut. Turner, commanding U.S. brig *Caledonia*, being stationed ahead of Capt. Elliott's vessel.

ERIE, Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1813.

Sir—In answer to your note of yesterday I have no hesitation in saying, that the *Niagara* was in the station assigned her previous to the engagement of the 10<sup>th</sup>, and it is my opinion, that you, sir, and every officer on board the *Niagara*, made use of every exertion, from the different situations, in which your vessel was in. Respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

DANL. TURNER.

Capt. Jesse D. Elliott.

**No. 5.****STATEMENT of Lieutenant Conkling.**[This officer commanded the vessel astern of the *Niagara*.]

At the commencement of the action, between the American and British fleets on Lake Erie, the brig *Niagara* was in the station which had been assigned to her, and appeared to behave well; when the signal was made for closer action, that vessel was near the enemies' [sic] ships *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, keeping up a well directed fire; and **the conduct of Capt. Elliott in bringing the smaller vessels into close action evinced the utmost activity and bravery.**

A.H. M. CONKLING

Lieut. Commanding the schr. *Tigress*.**No. 6.**Letter from the officers on board the *Niagara*, to the Secretary of the Navy.U. S. Sloop *Niagara*, 12<sup>th</sup> of Oct.

At anchor off Detroit, U. C.

Respected Sir—We have with regret seen the condensed, and suffer us to add, partial statements of the late *action* on Lake Erie, and **induced by motives of the warmest admiration for our commander, Captain Elliott**, we take the liberty of laying before you our combined observations on the above late action—and knowing as we do, your power of discrimination and impartiality of judgment, we commit it to you, with full confidence of its universal evidence and consideration.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1813, while lying in Put-in Bay, the enemy's fleet was discovered from the *Lawrence's* mast head. At 5 A.M. signal 1205. Our squadron weighed, and commenced beating out of the bay, in company the *Lawrence*, Capt. Perry, the *Niagara*, Capt. Elliott, the *Caledonia*, *Ariel*, *Scorpion*, *Somers*, *Porcupine*, *Tigress*, and *Trippe*. At 6 A.M. discovered the sails in the western board to be the enemy's squadron, consisting of two ships, two brigs, one schooner, one sloop, with their larboard tacks on board, standing to the southward under easy sail, our squadron using all possible exertion to join them by beating out of the bay, the wind continued from southward and westward; when out of the bay, kept our wind upon the larboard tack, in order to preserve the weather guage, which was affected—observed the enemy's squadron to form in line of battle ahead, in the following order: —the *Detroit* leading the van, brig *Hunter*, *Queen Charlotte*, *Lady Prevost*, *Chippewa*, and *Little Belt*. Our squadron forming in line of battle in the following order: Schooner *Ariel* of four, and *Scorpion* of two guns, on the *Lawrence's* weather bow, the *Lawrence*, Capt. Perry, leading the van; the *Caledonia*, the *Niagara*, the *Porcupine*, the *Somers*, the *Tigress* & *Trippe*. At a quarter before 12, the enemy's ship *Detroit* commenced firing on our headmost vessel, distance computed at one mile and an half. At meridian the action became general and closer, the whole of the enemy's fire being directed at the *Lawrence*, *Caledonia*, and *Niagara*. The *Lawrence* labored under a very great disadvantage at this time; observing her shot to fall *short of the Detroit*, who having long guns, placed her shot in the *Lawrence* deliberately and at discretion. This, in our opinion, is one reason why the *Lawrence*, became so much shattered. The *Niagara's* position was close astern of the *Caledonia*, which she maintained, and being a little abaft the weather beam of the *Queen Charlotte*, abreast the *Lady Prevost* and rest of the enemy's squadron, the whole of whose fire she sustained. At this time the *Queen*

*Charlotte* was discovered to bear up and stand away from the *Niagara*'s fire. Capt. Elliott ordered the fore and aft mainsail to be hauled, out and the jibsheet aft, in order to come up with her, she being the vessel we meant particularly to engage. The *Queen Charlotte* having gained the *Detroit*'s lee and the *Lawrence* gaining ahead, Capt. Elliott order the *Caledonia* to bear up and leave us room to close with the *Lawrence*, which was done, and the action carried on with great spirit and vigor on both sides. The most [of] our fire was now directed against the *Queen Charlotte*, (she having regained the line) *Lady Prevost* and *Little Belt*. We now ranged ahead, receiving the combined fires of the *Detroit*, *Queen Charlotte* and *Lady Prevost*. The *Lawrence* some time previous to this had dropped astern much shattered and useless. Captain Perry left her and came on board the *Niagara*; he observed to Capt. Elliott, that he apprehended the action was lost; who, with that spirit and promptitude we have been accustomed to see him exert, replied No, sir, I will yet try and save the day; he accordingly repaired on board, and taking the direction of one of the small vessels brought the whole of them into action at close musket shot; the consequence was, that in ten minutes the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, with the *Lady Prevost* struck to us, and soon after the whole of the enemy's squadron followed their example. The *Lawrence* had some minutes before struck her colors and hauled out the line. **You will perceive, sir, by this account, that the *Niagara* was most usefully and energetically engaged during the action, and the gallant manner, and the celerity with which the small vessels were brought into action, and the instant change effected by it, ranks Capt. Elliott, in our opinion, as second to none in the attainment of the late action. We are unwilling to quit the subject without expressing our estimation of our noble commander. We feel it is a duty to him, and to ourselves to express our opinion of his conduct during the action, which was manifested by his cool, brave and judicious deportment, and are firmly in opinion that his valor could not be surpassed by any; and that in him the American flag has a most zealous, skilful and heroic defender. We have here endeavored, sir, to give you a succinct and minute account from commencement to close. In doing this we have been actuated by unprejudiced love and respect for Capt. Elliott.**

We have the honor to be, sir, your obedient serv'ts,

JOS. E. SMITH, Lieut.

JOHN J. EDWARDS, Lieut.

H. MAGRATH, Purser.

NELSON WEBSTER, A. M.

A.B. BREVOORT,

Captain 2d Regt. U.S. Infantry.

Hon. W. Jones, Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

*Navy Department*, Oct. 19, 1920.

The foregoing is a true copy of the original now on file at this office. BENJAMIN HOMANS.

*To be Concluded in our next*

*The New-York Evening Post*

(No. 49 William Street)

**Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1821**

**No. 5812**

p. 2, c. 1-3

*The following conclude the documents of captain Elliott, in answer to those from the friends of Commodore Perry.*

**No. 7.**

Extract of a Report from the Secretary of the Navy to the hon. William Lowndes, chairman of the Navy Committee of the House of Representatives, dated

Navy Department, Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>, 1813

“While the heroic commander of the American squadron justly merits the highest honors, which the expression of the national councils can bestow, **the second in command, on that eventful day, appears to merit particular distinction, for the important and decisive share he had in that glorious event;** and it was grateful, in the highest degree, to reflect that every officer and man, on that trying occasion, discharged his duty to the nation, with zeal, fidelity, and honor.”

Copy of Record, BENJAMIN HOMANS.

**No. 8.**

Copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Navy to commodore Murray.

Navy Department, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1815.

SIR—It has been stated to this department, that by the proceedings of a court of enquiry in Great Britain, order to investigate the causes of the loss of the British fleet on lake Erie, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1813, the conduct of captain Jesse D. Elliott of the U.S. navy, who, commanded the brig *Niagara* on that day, is *misrepresented*; justice to the reputation of capt. Elliott, and to the navy of the United States, requires that a true statement of the facts, in relation to his conduct on that occasion, be exhibited to the world. The court, therefore, of which you are president, will immediately proceed to enquire into the same, to ascertain the part he sustained in the action of that day, and report its opinion thereon to this department.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

B. W. CROWINSHIELD [sic],

Com. Alexander Murray, New-York.

[Note. The court of enquiry alluded to in the above letter, was called at the request of capt. Elliot [sic], in consequence of information given him, that his conduct had been reflected on in a court martial held in England, for the trial of captain Barclay, but which afterwards proved not to be fact, being founded on a mere newspaper assertion.]

**No. 9.**

Navy Department, May 1, 1815.

Sir: I have received, and approved the proceedings and opinion of the court of enquiry convened at your request, to investigate your conduct in the memorable battle on Lake Erie, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1813.

Your request to submit the same to the President, and to receive additional testimony to your high character and standing as an officer cannot be acceded to—as no doubt have ever existed in this department, of your skill, bravery, and good conduct, on that memorable occasion, as well as on all others in the United States’ service.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD,

Capt. J. D. Elliott, U.S. Navy, New York.

## No. 10.

*Major H. B. Brevourt's affidavit.*

On the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, 1813, captain Oliver H. Perry called on board the *Niagara* to see captain Elliott and myself; we not being on board, word was left to call on board the *Lawrence* on our return—(whether we went immediately or not, I cannot say, as it was known he was on shore) —it is my impression we waited and all three went on board the *Lawrence* together, where we spent the evening. It was then determined to attack the enemy the next day at their anchorage, captain Elliott to lead the van.

Early on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, the vessels were short apeak by signal, and were preparing to get underway, when a signal from the *Lawrence* informed us, the enemy were in sight to windward. The wind being very light, boats were got ahead, and every exertion made to get the fleet out, which was succeeded in, when the wind changed in our favor, though very light—We were close together, when, by captain Perry's request, I pointed out the different ships—he determined to attack the heavy ship himself, by which the arrangements of the previous evening were done away—The *Lawrence* to lead and attack the *Detroit*, at a very great distance, the *Caledonia* the *Hunter*, the *Niagara* the *Charlotte*, and so on. The enemy opened their fire from the *Detroit*, at a very great distance, and very little damage was done on either side for some time; at length the battle became pretty general with the 3 leading vessels. Seeing the *Lawrence* bearing the heaviest part of the battle, (though the *Ariel* and *Porcupine* were a little to windward and ahead, to draw part of the enemy's fire off,) captain Elliott determined to break the line, and made more sail and ran close to the *Caledonia*, and requested Mr. Turner to bear up, and let him pass to the assistance of the *Lawrence*, which he did. —We had now a better opportunity with the *Charlotte*, and continued a heavy fire on her—coming near the *Lawrence*, a boat was discovered coming off from her, which soon passed under our stern, and came to our Larboard gang-way, when captain Perry came on board and observed, “the damned gun-boats have ruined me, and I'm afraid they have lost me the day.” Captain Elliott observed, “take charge of my battery, and I'll bring them up and save it,” or words to that effect. Something was then asked about the crew being much injured, &c. when captain Elliott immediately departed. Captain Perry then directed the vessel laid close to the large ship, and observed to me that she was much injured, and would not give her up. The engagement now became very warm, the gun-boats getting up very fast. The smoke clearing a little away, the *Lady Provost* was seen dead ahead of us; capt. Perry directed her decks cleared by the marines, which was soon done, and her colors struck, or shot away. By this time, some of the gun-boats were up, particularly the one capt. Elliott was on board of, raking the large ship, which soon struck her colors, as well as the *Charlotte* and others.

When capt. Elliott came on board, capt. Perry shook him by the hand, and observed, “I owe this to you,” indeed, I thought he paid him a very high compliment. Lieut. Smith, nor no other person, ever mentioned to me that they heard what was passing at the time, between them, when capt. Perry came on board, as he was on the opposite side at his quarters.

H. B. BREVOURT.

Detroit, Nov. 7, 1818.

*Territory of Michigan, to wit:*

Be it remembered, that on this seventeenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirteen, before me, George McDougall, Notary Public for the Territory of Michigan, by lawful authority duly commissioned and sworn, residing in the city

of Detroit, in said Territory, personally appeared Henry B. Brevourt, of the county of Wayne, in the Territory of Michigan, aforesaid, Esquire, who, being solemnly sworn on the Holy Evangelists of almighty God, disposeth and saith, that the above and foregoing two pages, by him subscribed, is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Of which a certificate being by him required, I have granted the same, under my Notorial form and Seal of Office, at the city of Detroit aforesaid, the day and year above written,      GEORGE McDOUGALL  
Notary Public, Michigan Territory.

### No. 11.

Letter from Lieutenant Adams to Capt. Elliott.

Washington, Nov. 22, 1818.

Sir—I regret extremely to learn that there have been attempts made to injure your reputation, and having had the honor to serve under your immediate command, on Lake Ontario and Erie, I feel it my duty to make known to you my sentiments on the subject—As in the circumstances, relative to the action upon Lake Erie, on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1813, I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion in positive terms, that your conduct on that day (as well as on all other occasions) was that of a gallant and skillful commander; I know you maintained the position given you by Captain Perry, until you ordered the *Caledonia* to bear up and let you pass, to take a more advantageous position; I do not recollect exactly as to the time of your changing your position; &c. but I saw a letter, shortly after it was written, addressed to the Navy Department by the commissioned officers of the *Niagara*, stating particularly the circumstances relative to the action, which I knew was correct. I saw Capt. Perry when he came on board the *Niagara*, and I also saw you leave her and pull down the line, to alter the positions of the smaller vessels. Being stationed in the foretop, I could not hear what conversation passed between Capt. Perry and yourself, neither previous to your leaving your ship, or on your return on board, after taking possession of the prizes, but I understood from Lieutenant Smith, and also from Midshipman Smith, (who both heard what passed) that Captain Perry observed that the day was lost, when you immediately replied, “no sir, if you will take charge of my battery, and permit me to go and bring the small vessels into closer action, the victory will be complete,” or expressions tantamount to them—while on board the *Niagara* your officers and men were animated by your noble example, and in going down the line and altering the positions of the schooners, which were considerably astern of the *Niagara*, I conceive that you have rendered your country a signal service.

It has been said, that you endeavoured to excite a party against Captain Perry, which assertion I believe to be unfounded and malicious—while in company with the commissioned officers, I never heard one of them express an opinion, that you had on any occasion, behaved cowardly; on the contrary, I have heard many of them assert that your conduct on all occasions had been brave and skillful. Although it may be considered unimportant, I cannot forbear mentioning to you, that Captain Barclay and Doctor Young both told me, that there was but one man killed and two men wounded on board the *Detroit*, previous to the *Niagara*'s engaging her.

Accept, sir, my best wishes for your future prosperity, and believe me, with the highest sentiments of respect and esteem, your obedient servant, S. WARDWELL [sic] ADAMS,  
Lieutenant in the Navy

Captain Elliott.

Came before the subscriber, a Justice of the Peace, in and for the body of Washington county and District of Columbia, S. Wardell Adams, who being duly sworn on the Holy

Evangelist of almighty God, deposeth and saith, that the statement and facts contained in the foregoing letter are just and true, to the best of his knowledge and belief. Sworn to before me, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of Nov. 1818. THOS. COCHRAN.

**No. 12**

Affidavit of Lieutenant Cummings, U. States' Navy.

Came before me, the subscriber, a Justice of the Peace, in and for the city of Washington county and District of Columbia, a Lieutenant in the Navy of the U. States, who being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God, deposeth and saith, : That in the action between the British and American squadrons on Lake Erie, that took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1813, he was stationed in the main top of the brig *Niagara*, that he could not see the rest of the squadron ahead, but distinctly heard capt. Elliott, his commander, (some time before capt. Perry came on board of that vessel) order the *Caledonian* out of the way, that he might shoot ahead. That the *Niagara* was then engaged with the *Queen Charlotte*, and *Lady Provost*, the latter vessel intending to cross our bow, capt. Elliott called boarders away and prevented her; that on Capt. Perry's coming on board the *Niagara*, he had some conversation with capt. Elliott which he the deponent could not hear, but lieut. and midshipman Smith have both stated to him, they heard capt. Perry say to capt. Elliott "that the day was lost." and that capt. Elliott replied "he thought not," and that he, capt. Elliott would bring the small vessels into action," to which proposition capt. Perry assented. This deponent further says, that a short time after capt. Perry came on board the *Niagara*, he saw capt. Elliott leave the ship; that he the deponent was about that time wounded and saw no more of the action—that all the officers of both squadrons with whom this deponent soon afterwards conversed, spake in the highest terms of the manner in which capt. Elliott conducted his ship—That this deponent is well convinced that capt. Elliott never lacked either conduct or exertion where he could tender any service to his country, and that as to his endeavouring to prejudice the officers against capt. Perry, this deponent never heard any thing of it while on the station; and further this deponent saith not.

Sworn before me this 25<sup>th</sup> day of Nov. 1818

THOMAS COCHRAN

**No. 13.**

Capt. J. D. Elliott

United States' Navy

Washington City, Jan. 22, 1821.

Sir: It was with pain for your feelings, disgust at the *motive*, and *contempt* for its *author*, that I yesterday perused, an anonymous pamphlet, purporting to be copies of certain documents, left by the late commodore O. H. Perry, relative to a difference which existed between you, concerning your conduct on the memorable 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1813, and as I had the honor of being in the fleet, and, during part of the engagement, under your immediate command, I deem it a duty, and I feel a great pleasure, in stating all that I know on the subject, for your satisfaction, as well as for the information of those who may feel interested. As well as I remember, we began the action, the commodore in front, the *Caledonia* next, the *Niagara*, and gun boats, in succession, my vessel, (the *Somers*,) being next to the *Niagara*. I believe the two larger vessels of the enemy had the van of their line—the wind was light, and the *Lawrence* reached some distance ahead, and in action, when it became perfectly calm; and, in this situation, we continued the engagement some time, (the *Niagara*, and some of the gun boats keeping up a fire,) when the commodore was seen to be much shattered; the wind sprung up, the *Caledonia* bore up, and the *Niagara* pushed ahead of her, as also, did the *Somers*, we leaving her, (the *Caledonia*,) on the starboard quarter, and, just after, I saw the

commodore board the *Niagara*, and you, sir, take his place in the boat, proceeding to the small vessels, boarding each, as you passed, and urged us on. You soon returned:—came on board of the *Somers*, and ordered us to cease firing, and draw the round *shot from the guns*, and replace them with grape and canister, the quarter gunner at the 32, being about to fire, did not appear to pay attention to the order, and persisted in firing, whereupon you struck him with a trumpet, which you held in your hand; and this is the *laughing scene*, when you are made to *dodge a chain shot!!* Of your general deportment during the engagement, as far as I saw, there was no want of ardour, patriotism, or valour—for when you came on board of my vessel, I naturally took your countenance for encouragement, which I fully received. I however, did not approve the punishment of the man at the gun, at that moment, though he deserved it, for his inattention to orders, and I believe, I afterwards stated this to you **at Erie**. As regards the charge of partiality—I saw none—I knew of none—and I do not believe that any existed. In relation to the charge of exciting a party against commodore Perry, I heard nothing of it, during my stay on the Lake, which was until February 1814. I knew, however, that many of the officers were your enemies; but I understood this to have proceeded from a supposition that you were too severe a disciplinarian, and not from any other cause, and at one time, I myself, entertained a similar opinion, only my more mature reason, has convinced me, that it proceeded from a zeal on your part, for the welfare of the navy, and to the discharge of your duty—these are my sentiments on this disagreeable subject, candidly expressed, and I do hope that they will have the effect on the mind of every honorable man to prevent any wrong impressions, which the author of the insidious pamphlet, which drew them forth, intended to make. You will do me the favor to use this paper, as you may deem most expedient.

With considerations of respect and esteem, I have the honor, to be, your very obedient servant.

W. NICHOLLS.

**No. 14.**

Extract from a letter from the Surgeon of the *Niagara*, dated January 21, 1821.

I was surprised a day or two ago in looking over the late paper, and no less mortified to find, that you still had enemies endeavouring *secretly* to undermine your reputation, and in the dark to plot your destruction. But you know sir that all the precious metals are polished by *rubbing*, and I doubt not these assassin attempts will only give additional lustre to the high character which you at present sustain, in spite of the machinations of your insidious [sic] foes. If dragged from their hiding places, I am sure they would be beneath your notice, and you would only treat them with pity and contempt.

**Text No. 14**

*Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*  
(Baltimore, Maryland)

**Saturday evening, June 30, 1821**  
**Vol. XVII, No. 154, Whole no. 2615**  
p. 2, c. 4

*From the Norfolk Beacon, June 26.*

The French gentlemen, citizens and residents of this place, gave a splendid Dinner on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. to Capt. **DE MARTININ**, and the officers of the French frigate **JUNON**, now laying in our harbor. *Jules F. Brette*, Esq. presided on the occasion. Among the toasts drank [sic] were the following: **OUR GUEST, CAPT. JESSE D. ELLIOTT**, of the United States' Navy—His gallantry in combat justly entitles him to be ranked among the first of her naval heroes. *By a Guest*—The frigate **JUNON**—Her discipline and good conduct have been a theme of admiration, and give an additional claim to American hospitality.

### **Text No. 15**

*The Berks and Schuylkill Journal*  
(Reading, Pennsylvania)

**Saturday morning (weekly), August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1827**

**Vol. XII, No. 14**

p. 2, c. 5

A handsome and valuable addition has been made to the Museum of Dickinson College, by Captain Jesse D. Elliott, of the United States Navy, who has recently returned from a cruise off the coast of Brazil. While engaged in protecting the commerce and maintaining the rights of the United States, on that station, he was not unmindful of the interests of Science; but has brought with him, and presented to our College, several beautiful specimens of Brazilian quartz, with silver, copper and iron ores, the two latter, chiefly from the mines of Huasco, and Coquimbo; also, a case of insects and one of birds, from the same region, together with the Amphibia of Brazil, among which is the skin of the Anaconda of South America; and also a case of shells and Marine fossils. —*Carlisle Volunteer*.

### **Text No. 16**

*The Baltimore Gazette & Daily Advertiser*  
(Baltimore, Maryland)

**Monday evening, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1834**

**Vol. 82, No. 13,540**

p. 2, c. 4

The Boston *Commercial Gazette* says:—"The city was thrown into an high degree of excitement yesterday morning, by a report from Charlestown that the figure-head of President Jackson, which was placed on the bows of the frigate *Constitution* by Commodore Elliott, had been mutilated during the night of Wednesday by some unknown hand. It appears that the head and shoulders of the President were fairly sawed off and carried away, no one knows where. The night was dark, the rain fell in torrents, the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, and the sentinels slept upon their posts! The *Constitution* lies between two seventy-fours, and the act is considered on all hands as one of a most daring character. The affair produced much merriment and exultation among the enemies of the President yesterday."

**Text No. 17**

*Richmond Enquirer*  
(Richmond, Virginia)

**Tuesday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1834**

**Vol. XXXI, No. 24**

p. 2, c. 4

NAVY YARD, BOSTON,  
July 21, 1834.

*To the Editor of the Boston Morning Post:—*

SIR—Having seen, in the *Boston Daily Advocate*, of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. the remarks of the Editor, by which he endeavors to justify the decapitation of the Figure on the bows of the *Constitution*, on the ground that the act of putting it on was unlawful, I have deemed it my duty to lay before your readers the authority which I had from the Navy Board, independent of my own, for placing it there, which I consider made it as lawful as the keel or keels of the ship.

This I do, notwithstanding I have caused it to be assert – in general terms in the *Evening Gazette* of the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, and the *Mercantile Journal* of the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, that I had full authority for my doings.

The extract which now follows will, I trust, put the question as to the legality of the ornament for ever to sleep.

Extract from the Navy Commissioners' letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1831—

SIR—

As the figure head is, by your statement, nearly completed, and as the Board are disposed to believe that your order was given without recollecting the article referred to, **and was intended as a compliment to the President of the United States**, they leave it to your discretion, with reference to all the circumstances attending the case, to place it, as originally intended by you, or to reserve it for one of the Ships of the line at the Yard, which are unprovided with heads.

Respectfully, &c.

(Signed) JNO. RODGERS.

Com. JESSE D. ELLIOTT, Commander Navy, &c.

It has been said that I have had communications made to me in writing, by respectable citizens, under their own signatures, requesting me to dispense with placing the Head upon the ship. Such is not the case. No communication from any respectable body of citizens was ever made to me, although threats, caricatures, and anonymous hand-bills have been showered bountifully upon me, by people who were either ashamed of the business or of their names.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,  
J. D. ELLIOTT.

**Text No. 18**

*New-Hampshire Sentinel*  
(Keene, N. H.)

**Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1835**

**Vol. XXXVII, No. 32**

p. 3, c. 3

An expensive dinner (cost \$1000) has been given to Com. Elliott, by the Jackson Corporation of New-York. [To pay him for the figure-head?]

....

The citizens of Buffalo have contracted for the completion of a great improvement in their harbor, (formed of a creek) the next Season. A cut is to be made from the creek to the Lake, 100 feet wide, forming a new entrance, to facilitate the admission and departure of vessels.

**Text No. 19**

*The Newport Mercury*  
(Newport, R.I.)

**Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1835**

**Vol. LXXIV, No. 3836**

p. 2, c. 4

LIFE OF COM. ELLIOTT.—A biography, or rather a book professing to be a biography of Com. Jesse D. Elliott, without either the name of the author or publisher, has lately appeared at New-York. The veracity of the biographer, and the end and object of the book, is well exhibited in the following notice from the New-York *Commercial Advertiser*:—

“Until the appearance of the present volume, it has always been supposed that a young sailor, aged about 25 years, by the name of Oliver Hazard Perry, had something to do with the transaction. It was also stated at the time that this Mr. Perry had under his command an officer by the name of Jesse D. Elliott. Now it so happened that this *hazardous* Mr. Perry ran his ship quite too near the foe, whereby it was riddled through and through, by the grape, and canister, and chain shot, rudely hurled thereat, by two or three ships of the enemy, to which he had very unguardedly exposed himself. Meantime, Mr. Elliott’s vessel could not, by any possibility, be placed in any such dangerous position. The consequence was surprisingly glorious for Mr. Elliott, inasmuch as when Perry’s ship was in a sinking condition, the latter was enabled to board the ship of the former, and by taking the command, bring her into action, fresh and fair, to mingle in the fray, and achieve the victory. All, or nearly all the credit of the transaction, was of course, due to Mr. Elliott; in which opinion we are supported by the author of the present work, who expressly says, (page 35,) “It is not claiming for him *too much* to say that, *to him* is the country PRINCIPALLY indebted for the honor of that memorable victory!” Take notice of this, ye naval commanders, and whenever you wish your services crowned with never fading laurels, keep your ships out of danger as long as possible.”

**Text No. 20**

*The Madisonian*  
(Washington City)

**February 17, 1839**  
**Vol. II, No. 196**

p. 3, c. 6

**COMMODORES PORTER AND ELLIOTT.**

We find in the *Sun* the following correspondence in relation to the “cut direct” which was given by the former to the latter.

GEORGETOWN, February 3d, 1839.

*Messrs. Editors:* To correct all misconception as to my opinions and feelings at the time I met Commodore Elliott in Baltimore, I send you the enclosed correspondence, which I will thank you to publish with this letter.

With great respect,  
Your very ob't serv't,  
DAVID POTER [sic]

CHESTER, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1838.

SIR: I have the honor to enclose you the copy of a letter, which I addressed to Commodore Elliott, occasioned by courtesies offered to me publicly, while I was removing from the Washington Railroad cars in Baltimore, to those which come to this place.

CHESTER, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1838.

SIR: To avoid any misconception, as to my receiving and returning courtesies from you, I have to request the favor, should we meet, that you will consider me a perfect stranger, until the reports which are in circulation prejudicial to you, are removed by a decision of a competent tribunal.

The reason for making this request is, that I have three sons in the Navy, whom I am unwilling should think that I treat such reports lightly.

I am with great consideration,  
Your very obedient servant,  
DAVID PORTER.

Commodore J. D. Elliott.

PHILADELPHIA, January 3d, 1839.

SIR: Your note of the 22d ultimo is received. It cannot be more agreeable to you than to myself that our acquaintance should cease. I am, sir,

JESSE DUNCAN ELLIOTT.

To David Porter, Esq.

GEORGETOWN, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1839.

SIR: I have received a note from Commodore Elliott, of which the enclosed is a copy, on which I shall only remark, that the man who is so indifferent to opinion, and so reckless of his own character, is, I should think, an unfit example to the younger officers of the Navy.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your very ob't serv't.

DAVID PORTER.

Hon. J. K. PAULDING, Sec'y of the Navy.

**Text No. 21**

*Boston Courier*  
(Boston, Massachusetts)

**Monday, February 18, 1839**  
**Vol. XIII, No. 1549**

p. 1, c. 4

ELLIOTT vs. PORTER. Some days since, we published a correspondence that had just taken place between Commodore Elliott and Capt. David Porter. The following letter from Commodore Elliott to the Secretary of the Navy, we take from the *United States Gazette*, and though we are not among the admirers of the Commodore, we must do him the justice to say that he rebukes the Secretary in a very fair manner:—

*Philadelphia*, Feb. 10, 1839

SIR—My attention has been drawn to a communication addressed to the editor of the *Baltimore Sun*, by Mr. Porter, late Charge d'Affaires of the United States at Constantinople, by perceiving amongst the letters communicated, two addressed to yourself.

It would not perhaps be worthy of me to take notice of the communication of that gentleman, or his *motives* in making them, to the Head of the Department, with which he has long ceased to have any official standing, were it not that in the letter under date of January the 6<sup>th</sup>, he gratuitously offers his opinions in relation to me and my character, in form and manner of complaint. He says that "I am indifferent to opinion, and reckless of my own character," and he thinks me "an unfit example to the younger officers of the Navy." I am exceedingly puzzled to discover wherein he finds grounds for the assertions, reflecting as it does so highly on the Executive of this country.

In my note in reply to his of the 22d of December, where he begs of me "the favor to consider him a perfect stranger: this "favor" was readily accorded him.

It is true that I feel indifferent to the opinions and motives of one from whom they come with so bad a grace. I could not, however, but feel a regret *on his* account, that one who had

been a distinguished officer in the Navy, should have set a precedent in violating the *common* rule of justice, in not according *innocence* until *guilt has been proven*; the more especially, when he knew that not one of the allegations presented to the Department, had been *deemed worthy of notice* by the *Executive*.

Were it permitted to me to have another regret on this occasion, it would be that the Honorable, the Secretary of the Navy, should have thought proper to receive and entertain so extraordinary a communication, without even according to me a copy of its contents.

I have the honor to be sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Signed,

JESSE D. ELLIOTT.

Hon. JAMES K. PAULDING,

*Secretary of the Navy.*

### Text No. 22

*New-Hampshire Sentinel*  
(Keene, N. H.)

**Wednesday evening, June 3, 1840**

**Vol. XLII, No. 23**

p. 3, c. 4

The army and navy are almost unanimous for Harrison. Of all the officers of distinction in either service, the *Atlas* says but two are in favor of Van Buren. These are *Jesse D. Elliott* and General *Jessup*! Heaven forbid that these men should mingle in the patriotic band of Harrison's supporters. The man who slandered his General and betrayed his enemy, may well refuse his support to the brave and generous Harrison; and he who truckled to his superiors and insulted his inferiors, may with reason attach himself to the fortunes of Martin Van Buren. We want no such men on our side.—*Providence Journal*.

### Text No. 23

6

*The Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics*  
(Portsmouth, New Hampshire)

**Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1840**

**Vol. LI, No. 35**

p. 2, c. 2

**MARTIN VAN BUREN, & JESSE D. ELLIOTT.**

The conduct of the President of the United States in abrogating in fact the sentence of the Court Martial against the notorious Commodore Elliott, without daring to take the

responsibility of disapproving or setting aside that most righteous decision, has drawn down upon the head of the Chief Magistrate very strong and well merited censure.

The offences of Commodore Elliott, proved by the most abundant testimony, and for committing which many people think he ought to have been cashiered,—were many and aggravated. Let us consider some of them:

“He is convicted of inflicting *cruel and illegal punishment*, in three several instances of whipping, by twice the number of lashes which he was, by law, allowed to inflict.”

The punishment of the lash for crimes in civil life, is one which has gone into disrepute with the “marking” and “branding” punishments of other days.—With many it is a source of complaint, that it is retained in the Navy under any circumstances; —but that an American officer should dare to go beyond the measure of the law, makes *him* the criminal, and should subject him to condign punishment.

Another offence, which, although it originated in low motives, is in our opinion of a high handed character. We allude to Com. Elliott’s *speculation in jackasses*, which encumbering the decks of the *Constitution* with stables to accommodate the loathsome brutes, in a manner as inconvenient and disagreeable to the whole ship’s company, as it is detrimental to the ship and derogatory to the honor of the national character. — “He was convicted,” says a contemporary,

“Of encumbering his ship, and rendering it loathsome to his men, and unfit for action, by the importation of donkeys on his private speculation. It was charged that, by this means, the guns were removed from their places, the men driven from their births [sic], and the hearty stomachs of the sailors turned by loathsomeness, and the Court find the charge *fully proved*.”

Many of our readers remember the disgrace inflicted upon our Flag by the miserable surrender of the *Chesapeake* by Com. Barron; a disgrace which not even a series of the most brilliant naval victories ever won in one short war has been able to efface. And yet this was caused not by Barron’s cowardice, nor by the want of courage of the men, or any inequality of force between the Frigates: —but *because the Chesapeake’s decks were encumbered, and she was not in fighting trim*. Now was not this precisely the case with the *Constitution*, —in kind, though not perhaps in degree? To lay aside the mean and mercenary motives of Com. Elliott in the present instance, —his converting the good old *Constitution* into a floating stable of jackasses for his own pecuniary benefit, and keeping out of view this unauthorized interference with the comfort and convenience of the ship’s company, —his imposing new duties upon them, and transforming his sailors into stable-boys and grooms, —we contend that beside all this, —the very fact that he cumbered up the ship’s decks, removed the guns from their places, lessened the force and armament of his ship, and in some degree at least rendered her unfit for action, —was a high-handed offence, and one for which he deserved a marked and unequivocal punishment.

Again:

“He is further convicted of begging from the scanty wages of the sailor a *service of plate* to adorn his sideboard, by way of a present. This act was attended by every conceivable circumstance of meanness. He originated it. When the first collection proved too small to meet his views, he got an under officer to try again, and at last, paying from his own purse nearly as much as was contributed, he displays the *whole service* as a testimony of respect, from his men!”

An act of more despicable meanness we never saw recorded against an officer, or a gentleman; nor can any thing be imagined more contemptible in itself, —more derogatory to the service, or more subversive of all discipline. But a still more serious part of the case is, that

“He was convicted *of converting public stores and property to his own public gain!* in other words, of *peculation* on the public property! An offence punishable by the penitentiary, in civil affairs, and ranked with felonies.”

The mild sentence of the Court Martial for all these aggravated offences, was a suspension from duty for four years, and a stoppage of his pay and emoluments for two years. To the mean and grovelling mind of Com. Elliott, such as these transactions evince it to be, it is plain that the stoppage of his pay was the only part of this sentence which he regarded as a punishment; and yet, —we can hardly realize the fact while we record it, —the President has abrogated this part of the sentence entirely, so that as the case now stands, Com. Elliott is *suspended from duty, whilst his pay is going on the same as if nothing had occurred!*

We shall not stop to comment upon this strange—this unprecedented conduct of the President of the United States, other than to say, — that this interruption of the course of justice would not have occurred in any other case whatever. He who runs can read, **that Elliott’s putting the figure head upon the Constitution, and General Jackson’s partiality towards him in consequence**, has caused his various, signal, notorious offences to be overlooked, and the just if not too lenient sentence of a Court Martial to be treated with contempt. How far and in what manner M. Van Buren’s friends undertake to justify him for this extraordinary conduct, we have yet to learn; —we have not seen the first beginning of an apology for him in any newspaper which supports him.

#### Text No. 24

*Daily Evening Transcript*  
(Boston, Massachusetts)

**Monday evening, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1843**

**Vol. XIV, No. 3864**

p. 2, c. 4

There is, says the *New York Courier*, a statement in the *Plebeian*, to the effect that the President is about to remit the sentence of Jesse D. Elliott, and place him in command of the U. S. line of battle ship *Pennsylvania*, the largest and noblest ship in our navy.

#### Text No. 25

James Fenimore Cooper (1789 in Burlington, New **Jersey** – 1851)

*The Ohio Statesman*  
(Columbus, Ohio)

Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1843

Vol. VII, No. 22

p. 1, c. 2-3

**COOPER'S NAVAL HISTORY—THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE—  
COMMODORE ELLIOTT, AND HIS SLANDERERS.**

Among the new books which, of late, we have found upon our table, is a work entitled "*Battle of Lake Erie; or, Answers to Messrs. Burges, Due, and Mackenzie*, by J. Fennimore Cooper." We have read the work with an interest many of Cooper's novels have failed to inspire, and have risen from its perusal with a full and settled conviction that the war, which for years, has been waged, with a relentless severity, against Jesse D. Elliott, has been cruelly unjust.

When Mr. Cooper wrote his Naval History of the United States, a review of it appeared in the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, and in which an attempt was made to show that the part which Mr. Cooper assigned to Commodore Elliott, in the Battle of Lake Erie, [had] done injustice to Commodore Perry, and that Elliott acted, in that battle, the part of a craven in neglecting, or refusing, to bring up the *Niagara* to the relief of Perry's ship, the *Lawrence*. In other things, besides these mentioned, the review [had] done injustice, as Mr. Cooper conceived, to his work; and the consequence was, an amicable suit, for slander, against the editor of the paper in which the review was published. The parties agreed to leave the case to referees, and three gentlemen, of high character and standing, were selected—a long investigation was had—witnesses were examined, and the result was that Cooper's Naval History, in every essential particular, relative to the battle of Lake Erie, was found to be, and pronounced, substantially correct. The editor of the *Commercial Advertiser* made the necessary retraction; and the Naval History, after such an ordeal, must be considered the best of authority.

Until we read the book, which we have mentioned, we had not the least conception of the malignant malice with which Commodore Elliott has been treated. It is impossible that the present generation can ever do full justice to Elliott; for so much slander has been heaped upon his head, for the last twenty years, and so deeply have the feelings of community been enlisted against him, that he must wait for another generation, and other times, before his name can be cleared of the calumnies with which malice has surrounded it.

From the facts, as set forth by Mr. Cooper, it appears that the reasons why the *Niagara*, (the vessel which Elliott commanded, during the battle of the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1812,) remained in the rear, was that, in the order of battle, as promulgated by Perry before the engagement, that was the station assigned to the *Niagara* by the Commodore commanding the squadron. Capt. Elliott would have been justly liable to censure, had he disobeyed that order. It is true, however, that Elliott did break through the orders, but it was not until he had reason [to] suppose that Perry had been killed; and then it was that this man, branded as he has been with cowardice by fireside patriots, and, in defiance of orders, ranged along side of the British fleet; and it is a fact but little known that at the time Perry shifted his flag from the *Lawrence* to the *Niagara*, that the latter vessel, commanded by Elliott, was nearer the enemy than was Perry's own vessel. Even at the commencement of the engagement, Elliott's vessel was so near the British fleet that some of his men were wounded by musket balls. In the official account of that battle, Commodore Perry gave much credit to Capt. Elliott when the facts were fresh in his memory, and though that praise was afterwards withdrawn, yet the proof,

subsequently given, shows that the official account, so far as it spoke of Capt. Elliott's services, was strictly correct.

Another fact, relative to the battle, seems to show the studied concealment of facts which redound to the credit of Elliott. The fact of Commodore Perry leaving the *Lawrence* with his flag in an open boat, and passing through the line until he reached the *Niagara*, has been justly cited as an act of cool daring, worthy of all praise. But comparatively few persons are aware that Capt. Elliott, during the same action, twice passed through nearly the whole line of battle in an open boat, and, in so doing, rendered an essential service in bringing up the gun boats, during the heat of the engagement. If, then, Perry was entitled to praise for the performance of a gallant action, the traducers of Elliott do well to conceal the fact that he twice performed a similar one, for it would, at once, brand their assertion, about cowardice, as entirely destitute of foundation.

The question may be asked, what reasons could exist for hunting down Mr. Elliott by false charges. The reasons are various. It is but seldom that an inferior officer gets credit for assistance rendered in an action. The relatives of Commodore Perry feared that this battle would form one of the exceptions to the rule, and that a portion of the laurels, of that gallant action, would adorn the brow of Elliott, and that the fame of the first in command would have to be shared with a second. This was, undoubtedly, the cause of the first onset being made on Elliott, and the fact of that much injured individual professing democratic sentiments, has brought the whole federal press to the aid of his traducers; and, by the constant repetition of their slanders, they have forced the belief, into the public mind, that Elliott is guilty of every crime charged against him.

Among the relatives of Com. Perry who have stood prominent in their fierce attack on Cooper's Naval History, and upon Com. Elliott, is Capt. Alexander S[?]hdell Mackenzie, of the United States Navy, and author of a work in two volumes, entitled a life of Com. Perry. Mr. Cooper is a democrat, and it is a singular fact, that when his Naval History was published, Mr. Spencer, and then Secretary of State, in New York, as Superintendent of Common Schools, refused to recommend the Naval History into the schools of that State, upon the ground that a controversy had arisen relative to the truth of Cooper's version of the battle of Lake Erie, though he afterwards admitted Mackenzie's life of Perry, the very book which gave rise to the controversy.—Since that time Cooper's work after a long investigation, has been decided to be true in every .....[line clipped off] .....proven false. The same Mackenzie, while in command of the brig *Somers* but a few months since, hung the son of John C. Spencer, without the formality of a trial, and even without giving him time to prepare for the great and awful fate which awaited him, for an alleged mutiny; and it is a singular fact that the same vindictive press which justified the exclusion of Cooper's work from the Common Schools of New York, and the subsequent admission of Mackenzie's, also justified Mackenzie in the cruelty practiced upon young Spencer.—The father subsequently deserted Mr. Clay, and linked his fortunes to John Tyler.

We said that Com. Elliott held to the sentiments of the democratic party. Some years since while in the command of the far-famed *Constitution* frigate, at his own cost he had prepared a carved figure head representing the Hero of New Orleans, rightly judging that the figure of a man who had saved the constitution of his country from prostration by a mammoth moneyed institution, and who had filled the "measure of his country's glory" in the field of battle, was peculiarly fitted to grace the bows of that noble frigate. Aided by the darkness of night, some cowardly scoundrels sawed the head from that figure, and to the eternal disgrace of the federal party the cowardly act was approbated by the federal press, and the head itself was

exhibited at a dinner in Boston given to that arch federalist, Daniel Webster, and received with spirits of applause by men, many of whom during the last war, burned blue lights as signals to the enemy. In thus bestowing a compliment upon Gen. Jackson and in being a democrat, Com. Elliott has drawn upon his devoted head the enmity of the federal party, and hence it is that the federal press join in with the Duer's, the Mackenzie's and Burges's in depreciating the services which Elliott has rendered, and in branding with cowardice as brave a man as fought during the last war.

Mr. Cooper also, some years ago, wrote a defence of Gen. Jackson's celebrated protest to the United States Senate, against the resolution of censure which Clay had passed against him. In attacking Cooper's work and Elliott's courage, the federal press had the motive of injuring both. In regard to Cooper, they triumphed only to make their defeat more certain, and if justice be not done to Elliott while he lives, the impartial historian will assign him a station in history, where he will live in grateful remembrance as long as the events of the last war with England are remembered.

In the above, we know that we are combating against the pre-conceived opinions of many of our readers who have drawn their opinions from federal sources; but our attention having lately been drawn to the services rendered by Elliott, we could not refrain from lending our feeble aid in placing him in a proper light before our readers. The signal services of Com. Perry—his indomitable courage and energy, live in grateful remembrance, and his memory certainly cannot be tarnished by doing justice to another, and we trust it will not be from the folly and indiscretion of his relatives in traducing the individual who acted as second in command at the battle of Lake Erie.

### Text No. 26

*The Perry's Victory Centenary:  
Report of the Perry's Victory Centennial Commission,  
State of New York*

Compiled by George D. Emerson, Secretary  
Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, Printers, 1916, "Rewarding the Victors"

P. 229: THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS of 1813-14 was not backward or niggardly in its expression of appreciation of the services of the officers and men of Perry's fleet on the memorable tenth day of September, 1813. On the sixth day of February, 1814, resolutions were adopted by Congress extending its thanks to the officers and men of the fleet for their services in the battle of Lake Erie and authorizing the President to have prepared and **presented to Commodore Perry and to Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott** each a gold medal with a suitable design of the battle. . . . .

P. 230: The prize money paid was allotted each man according to rank and pay as per following table:

Commodore Perry	\$7,140 00
Lieutenant Elliott	7,140 00
Lieutenants and sailing masters	2,295 00

.....

Commodore Perry was subsequently voted \$5000 additional by Congress.

**Text No. 27***In Senate of the United States.***February 18, 1844 [i.e. 1845]****Date: 1844-12-02**

Serial Set. Vol. No. 456, Session Vol. No. 7

28<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session

S. Doc. 105

**28<sup>th</sup> Congress,**  
*1<sup>st</sup> Session***[SENATE.]****[ 105]****IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES**

FEBRUARY 18, 1844.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BAYARD made the following

**REPORT:**

[To accompany bill 8. 133.]

*The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the petition of Jesse D. Elliott, report:*

That the petitioner is a captain in the United States navy, and was in command of the Mediterranean squadron from the year 1835 to the year 1839. During the period of that command, he was subjected to considerable expense in entertaining the King and Queen of Greece, the Prince of Saxe Cobourg, and the Pacha of Egypt. He was also, as he states, subjected to further expense in entertaining the prime minister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Captain Pacha of the Egyptian fleet, and the Pachas of Beyroot, Tyre, Sidon, and Jaffa, the Bashaw of Smyrna, and the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands.

The committee, adopting the principles laid down in the report made in the case of Captain Charles W. Morgan, (Senate Document 235, 1<sup>st</sup> session 28<sup>th</sup> Congress,) are of the opinion that the items marked (A,) comprising the expenses incurred in the entertainment of the King and queen of Greece, the Prince of Saxe Cobourg, and the Pacha of Egypt, should be allowed, "as extraordinary expenses, not the result of mere liberality, but as connected with the credit and dignity of the country, in acts of national courtesy." The other items of the account, marked (R,) the committee think should be rejected, on the principle laid down in the same report, of being "expenditures arising from the voluntary interchange of civilities with distinguished foreign officers, which is a matter of mere liberality, regarding only the character of the officer," and with reference to which expenses, the pay of the officer must be supposed to have been adjusted.

The committee accordingly report a bill for the relief of the petitioner.

*The United States of America, to Jesse D. Elliott, of U. S. Navy,*

To receiving and entertaining on board the United States frigate <i>Constitution</i> , off Athens, in the month of September, 1835, the King of Greece and members of his court, (A).....	500 00
To receiving and entertaining the suit of Saxe Cobourg, his bridegroom, and the illustrious personages of the Court of Lisbon, in the <i>Tagus</i> , in the month of April, 1836, (A).....	500 00
To receiving and entertaining the King of Greece and his bridal Queen, with the illustrious personages of the Court, male and female, in the month of May, 1837, off Athens, (A).....	500 00
To receiving and entertaining Mehemit Ali, the Pacha of Egypt, and the high officers of his Court, in the harbor of Alexandria, in Egypt, in the month of September, 1837, (A).....	500 00
To outlays in preparing for a visit from the prime minister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and for receiving and entertaining them on board the <i>Constitution</i> , ( R )...	400 00
To receiving his highness Ibrahim Pacha, the Capuden Pacha of the Egyptian fleet, and for entertaining them in the harbor of Tripoli, ( R ).....	350 00
To receiving and entertaining the Pacha of Beyroot, Tyre, Sidon, and Jaffa, the Bashaw of Smyrna, and the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, and the Ionian Governor, at different times, ( R ).....	700 00
	<u>3,450 00</u>

**Text No. 28**

*The New York Herald*  
(New York City)

**Friday morning, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1845**

Vol. XL, No. 51; Whole No. 4013  
p. 2, c. 1

**TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.**  
**Second Session.**  
**In Senate.**  
**Petitions.**

Mr. BAYARD, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, reported a bill for the relief of Com. Jesse D. Elliott. Read and ordered a second reading.

**Text No. 29**

*The New York Herald*  
(New York City)

**Monday morning, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1845**

Vol. XL, No. 68; Whole No. 4030  
p. 2

Commodore Elliott had his pocket picked at the White House on Inauguration day. The thief deprived him of his pocket book, which contained several relics, which the old Commodore prized very highly. **One was a letter from Gen. Jackson, congratulating him on his restoration to his position in the service—praising Young Hickory—and predicting a most popular administration under his auspices—and also containing a lock of the old General's hair, as a memento for the Commodore. Another was a letter from Mrs. Madison enclosing a lock of Mr. Madison's hair, and there were several others. The old Commodore says the thief may keep all the money the wallet contained, and be perfectly welcome, if he will but return the relics, which he prizes so highly.**

**Text No. 30**

*The Pittsfield Sun*  
(Pittsfield, Massachusetts)

**Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1845**

**Vol. XLV, No. 2397**  
p. 2, c. 2

*Hermitage, March 27, 1845*

DEAR SIR—Your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. together with a copy of the proceedings of the National Institute, furnished me by their Corresponding Secretary, on its presentation, by you, of the sarcophagus for their acceptance, on condition it shall be preserved, and in honor of my memory, have been received, and are now before me.

Although laboring under great debility and affliction, from a severe attack from which I may never recover, I raise my pen and endeavor to reply. The steadiness of my nerves may, perhaps, lead you to conclude my prostration of strength is not so great as here expressed. Strange as it may appear, my nerves are as steady as they were 40 years gone by; whilst, from debility and affliction, I am gasping for breath.

I have read the whole proceedings of the presentation, by you, of the sarcophagus, and the resolutions passed by the Board of Directors, so honorable to my fame, with sensations and feelings more easily to be conjectured than by me expressed. The whole proceedings call for my most grateful thanks, which are hereby tendered to you, and through you to the President

and Directors of the National Institute. But with the warmest sensations that can inspire a grateful heart, I must decline accepting the honor intended to be bestowed. I cannot consent that my mortal body shall be laid in a repository prepared for an emperor or a king. My republican feelings and principles forbid it; the simplicity of our system of government forbids it. Every monument erected [to] perpetuate the memory of our heroes and statesmen ought to bear evidence of the economy and simplicity of our republican institutions, and the plainness of our republican citizens, who are the sovereigns of our glorious Union, and whose virtue is to perpetuate it. **True virtue** cannot exist where pomp and parade are the governing passions; it **can only dwell with the people—the great laboring and producing classes that form the bone and sinew of our confederacy.**

For these reasons I cannot accept the honor you and the President and Directors of the National Institute intended to bestow. I cannot permit my remains to be the first in these United States to be deposited in a sarcophagus made for an emperor or king. I again repeat, please accept for yourself, and convey to the President and Directors of the National Institute, my most profound respects for the honor you and they intended to bestow. I have prepared a humble repository for my mortal body beside that wherein lies my beloved wife, where, without any pomp or parade, I have requested **when my God calls me to sleep with my fathers**, to be laid; **for both of us there to remain until the last trumpet sounds to call the dead to judgment, when we, I hope, shall rise together, clothed with that heavenly body promised to all who believe in our glorious Redeemer, who died for us that we might live, and by whose atonement I hope for blessed immortality.**

**I am, with great respect, your friend and fellow-citizen,** ANDREW JACKSON.

*To Com. J. D. Elliott, U. S. Navy.*

### Text No. 31

*The Pittsfield Sun*  
(Pittsfield, Massachusetts)

**Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1845**

**Vol. XLV, No. 2397**

p. 2, c. 2

**NAVY-YARD, PHILADELPHIA,**  
***April 8th, 1845.***

GENTLEMEN—The interest which the National Institute has been pleased to take in the eventual bestowment of the remains of the honored Andrew Jackson in the sarcophagus I brought from abroad, and deposited in your Institute, makes it my business now to communicate to you a copy of his letter of the 27th ult. lately received, on that subject.

With sentiments so congenial to his strict republicanism—and in accordance, indeed, with the republican feelings common to ourselves—he takes the ground of repugnance to connecting his name and fame in any way with imperial associations.

We cannot but honor the sentiments which have ruled his judgment in the case; for they are such as must add to the luster of his character. We subscribe to them ourselves; and, while we yield to their force, we may still be permitted to continue our regard to the enduring

marble, as to an ancient and classic relic—a curiosity in itself, and particularly in this country, as the first of its kind seen in our western hemisphere.

From it we would deduce the moral, that, while we disclaim the pride, pomp and circumstance of imperial pageantry, as unfitting our institutions and professions, we would sedulously cherish the simple republican principle of reposing our fame and honors in the hearts and affections of our countrymen.

I have now, in conclusion to say, that, as the sarcophagus was originally presented with the suggestion of using it as above mentioned, I now commit it wholly to the Institute as their own and sole property, exempt from any condition.

I am, very respectfully, yours, &c.

JESSE DUNCAN ELLIOTT.

*To the President and Directors of the National Institute, Washington.*

### Text No. 32

*Emancipator & Weekly Chronicle*

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1845

p.2, c. 5

GEN. JACKSON AND THE SARCOPHAGUS.—A man named Jesse Elliott, who holds the commission of captain in the United States navy, has been for fifteen years trying to gratify his passion for distinction, and **perhaps to divert public attention from some matters connected with Perry's victory on Lake Erie**, by acts of the most extravagant adulation towards Gen. Jackson. **The old hero** stood it wonderfully for a time; and even permitted the toady to put the head of Jackson on the prow of old iron-sides; but it seems that servility has at length overreached itself. —**Com. Elliott**, while commanding a frigate in the Mediterranean, possessed himself of sundry ancient relics; among them was a sarcophagus, or stone coffin, that had once enclosed the remains of the Roman emperor Severus, the prosecutor of the Christians. After pondering how he could gain the greatest éclat in the disposal of such a prize, he concluded to try once more and see what he could make out of Gen. Jackson; and to give additional consequence to his scheme, he called in the aid of the National Institute, a society of clerks and other office holders at Washington. He therefore presented the sarcophagus to the institute, on condition that they offer to place Gen. Jackson's body in it, for burial, after his decease.

The institute seems to have been hungry as for notoriety as the commodore, and oblivious of all taste and propriety, hastened to offer the general the honor of having his bones laid in the same cavern with those of a Roman emperor!

We are glad to see, that in this case, Gen. Jackson's good sense and republican feeling burst through the coating of adulation with which interested sycophants had slimed him over, and he promptly repelled the proposal, in terms which we should think would tingle the cheeks of every actor in the transaction. He says:—

“I cannot consent that my mortal body shall be laid in a repository prepared for an emperor or a king. My republican feelings and principles forbid it; the simplicity of our system of government forbids it. \* \* \* I have prepared a humble repository for my mortal body beside that wherein lies my beloved wife, where, without any pomp or parade, I have requested, when my God calls me to sleep with my fathers, to be laid; for both of there to remain until the last trump[et] sounds to call the dead to judgment, when we, I hope, shall rise together, clothed with that heavenly body promised to all who believe in **our glorious Redeemer, who died for us, that we might live**, and by whose atonement I hope for blessed immortality.”

All honor **to the old man** for this striking testimony, that after all his distinction, he goes out of the world feeling that he is but a man, a sorrowing widower, a sinner to be saved by grace.

A correspondent of the *Cleveland Herald* lately visited General Jackson, at the Hermitage, and during the interview, the sarcophagus became the subject of conversation, **when the old hero** expressed himself with characteristic energy. After remarking that he felt himself complimented by Com. Elliott’s proposition, he drew himself up in his chair, and said:

“What, sir, I, Andrew Jackson, suffer myself to be buried in a thing made for kings and emperors—I, sir, who have lived a republican all my days, to set such an example to the American people! Preposterous, sir, upon my honor, sir. No, sir, I shall be buried in my garden, by the side of my revered wife, and that, too, sir, without pomp and parade, sir.”

### Text No. 33

*(ibid.)*

p. 2, c. 4

THE LAST LIKENESS OF GENERAL JACKSON.—Messrs. Anthony, Edwards & Co., of 247 Broadway, have received from their partner the pleasing intelligence that he has taken a very fine daguerreotype of Gen. Jackson. Mr. Anthony tarried at Nashville a week, waiting until the general was so far recruited that he could sit up. He writes—

“I found the general very feeble, but willing to sit for me. I succeeded in getting a most perfect likeness, with a calm, dignified expression. It is in ‘three quarter’ view, and I took another in profile. I took also a view of his residence, a good one, though somewhat obscured by trees. —The family treated me with great kindness, and the general gave me a paternal blessing at parting. He is evidently fast passing away. I shall not soon forget the scenes I have witnessed at the hermitage. I must not forget to mention that I procured some hickory wood from the farm to make frames for the likenesses.”

### Text No. 34

*The Georgia Telegraph & Republic*  
(Macon, Georgia)

**Tuesday morning, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1845 (Weekly)**

New Series: Vol. 1, No. 33  
p. 2, c. 3

*From the Savannah Georgian*  
**ANDREW JACKSON.**

“I cannot consent that my mortal body shall be laid in a repository prepared for an emperor or king. My republican feelings and principles forbid it; the simplicity of our system of government forbids it. **Every monument erected to perpetuate the memory of our heroes and statesmen ought to bear evidence of the economy and simplicity of our republican institutions, and the plainness of our republican citizens, who are the sovereigns of our glorious Union, and whose virtue is to perpetuate it. True virtue cannot exist where pomp and parade are the governing passions, it can only dwell with the people—the great laboring and producing classes that form the bone and sinew of our confederacy.**

“For these reasons I cannot accept the honor you and the President of the Directors of the National Institute intended to bestow. I cannot permit my remains to be the first in these United States to be deposited in a sarcophagus made for an emperor or king. I again repeat, please accept for yourself, and convey to the President and Directors of the National Institute, my most profound respects for the honor you and they intended to bestow. **I have prepared an humble depository for my mortal body beside that wherein lies my beloved wife,** where,, **without any pomp or parade,** I have requested, **when my God calls me to sleep with my fathers,** to be laid; for both of us there to remain until the last trumpet sounds to call the dead to judgment, **when we, I hope, shall rise together,** clothed with that heavenly body promised to all who believe in our glorious redeemer, who died for us that we might live, and by whose atonement I hope for blessed immortality.” —*Extract from the letter of Andrew Jackson to Com. Elliott, U.S.N. dated Hermitage, March 27, 1845.*

**Text No. 35**

*Vermont Gazette*  
(Bennington, Vermont)

**Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1845**

**Vol. LXV, No. 4,197**  
**New Series: Vol. 16, No. 28**  
**p.1, c. 6**

*Eulogy*  
ON GEN. ANDREW JACKSON

Pronounced by Hon. B. F. Butler, in New York, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1845.

Excerpt:

**The Valley of the Mississippi, the theatre of his youthful valor and of his meridian renown—the sanctuary of his declining age—folds within her bosom the ashes of her Hero.** In the centre of that young but vigorous State, whose destinies, once his anxious care,

were long the objects of his satisfied regard; on the sunny banks of the Cumberland, where the strong verdure of the West begins reluctantly to yield to the luxuriant beauty of the South; embosomed in a sacred solitude, stands the Tomb of the HERMITAGE—henceforth to divide with MOUNT VERNON the respect, the admiration and the reverence of mankind. **The simplicity of his life, the calm dignity of his death, are exemplified by the humility of his grave.**

**You remember how he rejected the imperial honor that was proffered to his bones—**“I cannot permit my remains to be the first in these United States to be deposited in a sarcophagus made for an emperor or king. I have prepared a humble depository for my mortal body beside that wherein lies my beloved wife, where, without any pomp or parade, I have requested [sic], when my God calls me to sleep with my fathers, to be laid; for both of us there to remain until the last trumpet sounds to call the dead to judgment when we, I hope, shall rise together, clothed with that heavenly body promised to all who believe in **our glorious Redeemer, who died for us that we might live**, and by whose atonement I hope for a blessed immortality.

This was the answer of christian meekness, of Republican simplicity, of American Patriotism. Catching the strain from the lips of the dying Hero, we may echo its lofty inspiration. More than this, we may give to it to-day a new and sublimer significance. Sleep sweetly, aged Soldier, Statesman, Sage, in the grave of kindred and affection. **It matters little where his body is laid, whose memory is enshrined in all our hearts; the monument of whose fame is the Country that he has saved; the inscription of whose greatness are the praises of the World.** But if there be any solace in Memory; if any virtue in the contemplation of heroic deeds; any purity in the lessons of sublime example; to the sepulcher of JACKSON let the pilgrimage of humanity be made—in the ardor of a generous enthusiasm; the sympathy of a fraternal love; **the consolation of a Christian faith.**

### Text No. 36

*The North American*  
(Philadelphia)

**Friday morning, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1845**

**Vol. VII, No. 2087**  
p.2, c.2

### DEATH OF COMMODORE ELLIOTT

Commodore Jesse Duncan Elliott, of the United States Navy, died in this city on Wednesday night.

Commodore Elliott was born in Maryland, in the year 1785. He was therefore about sixty years of age. His father, a Pennsylvanian, and a Commissary in the service of the United States, was killed by the Indians while conducting supplies to General Wane, on the Muskingum, in 1794. In 1805, while Jesse D. Elliott was a student at Carlyle, preparing to enter upon the study of law, he was appointed a midshipman in the navy by President Jefferson, and he soon after sailed under Captain Barron for the Mediterranean. He won the

friendship of all the officers under whom he served as a midshipman, and in 1810 was sent with dispatches to our minister in London. When the war of 1812 was declared, he was ordered to superintend the naval preparations on Lake Erie, and in September of that year he gained great applause by gallantly cutting out the British brigs *Detroit* and *Caledonia*, from under Fort Erie. For this important service he received the special thanks of the President, and by an unanimous vote of the two houses of Congress was presented with a sword. He was at this time but twenty-seven years of age. In 1813 he was appointed over more than thirty lieutenants a master commandant; in April of the same year he greatly distinguished himself in the attack upon York, in Upper Canada, and in the following September was in the Battle of Lake Erie. His conduct here has been a subject of much controversy, but we believe the impression is now general among men who have examined it, that Commodore Perry did not, as his friends have endeavored to prove, violate either his oath or his honor, when he said that "Elliott evinced his characteristic bravery and judgment" in that action, nor when he acknowledged that he "owed to him the victory."

In the spring of 1815, Elliott served under Decatur against Algiers, in 1817 he was appointed one of the commissioners to survey the coast of the United States, for the purpose of selecting sites for dock yards and fortifications; and in 1818 he was made a captain.

After a few years repose, Captain Elliott was appointed to the command of the *Cyane*, and ordered to the coast of Brazil, where he was offered an admiral a commission in the imperial service, which he declined. In 1829 he was made commander of the West India squadron, and being temporarily in the Hampton Roads in 1831, he pursued such a course in regard to the Southampton Negro insurrection, as secured for him the thanks of the governments of Virginia and of the United States.

The command of the land and naval forces at Charleston, at the time of the threatened revolt of South Carolina, was entrusted to General Scott and Commodore Elliott, and when the excitement had subsided, Elliott was appointed commandant of the navy yard at Charlestown, Massachusetts. Probably no one supposes now that his course here in regard to the figure head of the *Constitution* was deserving of much, if it was of the slightest, censure. In 1835 he sailed in the *Constitution* for France, and returned with Mr. Livingston, then our Minister to that country. He subsequently commanded the squadron in the Mediterranean, after which he resided several years on his farm in Chester, near this city. At the time of his death he was commandant of the Navy Yard in Philadelphia, but ill health had prevented his performance of the active duties of the office a large share of the time since his appointment.

We knew Commodore Elliott many years, and we think we knew him well. We have no wish to revive any of the controversies connected with his life, but this is not an improper time to speak of the good in his character. He is dead now. Let ungenerous prejudices go with his body to the grave. His friends have little need to ask for him more than justice, and this will not be willingly withheld.

He was rude of speech, a plain, blunt man, who loved his country and his friends, and hated her enemies and their enemies. He knew little and cared less about drawing room refinements. He had no regard for any formalities but those of his profession and rank. He never learned the word caution, and to serve a friend or to fulfil his duty he would brave the most imminent danger. No one could excel him in generosity. He would forget anything but an act of kindness. He never could regard an obligation as cancelled. He was very sensitive, and was elated or depressed by every word of praise or censure. Let this weakness and other

faults be forgotten. He was a good sailor, a good disciplinarian, a man of undaunted courage and of inflexible honesty, and these are not everyday virtues.

The proper shows of respect for the deceased Commodore, were made yesterday at the United States Naval Asylum and at the Navy Yard, and on the ships of war and other vessels in port.

His funeral will take place to-morrow, from his late residence, in Fourth street between Chestnut and Walnut streets. It will of course be attended by the officers of the Navy and the Army who may be in town, and by the military of the city.

### Text No. 37

*History of Erie County Pennsylvania* (Chicago: Warner, Beers & Co., 1884), p. 303, footnote:

JESSE D. ELLIOTT was born in Maryland in 1785. He entered the United States Navy as a Midshipman in 1806, and was promoted to a Lieutenantcy in 1810. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1812, he won great honor by leading an expedition which captured the British vessels *Adams* and *Caledonia* from under the guns of **Fort Erie**. For this he was awarded a sword, and the thanks of Congress. July 13, 1813, he was appointed to be a master commandant over the heads of thirty other lieutenants. In 1814, he was transferred to Lake Ontario. He did good service in the Mediterranean in 1815. In 1818, he was promoted to be a Captain, and subsequently had command of squadrons on several stations. He was tried for misconduct in 1840, and sentenced to four years suspension from the navy. **President Jackson [??], in 1843, remitted the balance of his sentence.** He died on the **18<sup>th</sup> [10<sup>th</sup>] of December, 1845.**

### Text No. 38

*The Southern Patriot*  
(Charleston, S. C.)

**Saturday afternoon, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1845**

Vol. LIV, No. 8237  
p.2, c.1

*From the Union.*

**OFFICIAL.  
GENERAL ORDER.**

As a mark of respect to the memory of Commodore Jesse D. Elliott, who died at Philadelphia on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant, while in command of the navy-yard there, the flags of the navy-yard and vessels in commission will be hoisted at half-mast, and thirteen minute guns fired at noon on the day after the receipt of this order.

Officers of the navy and marine corps will wear crape on the left arm for thirty days.

**GEORGE BANCROFT.**

**Navy Department, Dec. 12, 1845.**